"Book of the year. Made my heart burst." THE OBSERVER

julian cope

HEAD-ON

Memories of the Liverpool Punk-scene and the story of The Teardrop Explodes (1976-82)

"One of the funniest, bleakest rock reads you could wish for ... And throughout, Cope never portrays himself as anything less than a self-serving, childish, whinging half-assed failure. He's wrong, of course, but it makes for insanely funny reading."

Select

"Not only is the arch-drude perfectly balanced mentally, but he has the longest and most detailed memory (or the most extensive and exhaustive diary) in rock ... As a glimpse of the essentially pathetic but amusing whims and eccentricities that lie behind the screwed down hairdos of rock musicians, it's equally essential reading. And as a genital-warts-and-all diary of madmen, it is simply supreme entertainment."

NME

"... an enthralling saga of bitchiness, betrayal and unrepentant debauchery. It guarantees a full day's top entertainment to fans and foes, for whatever your opinion of Cope's vocal abilities or sartorial style, there's no denying he's a very good writer. From the moment he stops the bullying caused by his success in a school production of *Oliver!* by kissing the ring-leader to his band's dissolution in shame and degradation, there is not a dull moment. As well as pushing back the boundaries of personal hygiene and sexual licence, and proving once and for all that hallucinogenics should not be treated as a primary food group, Cope thoroughly demystifies the creative process: 'It needed a refrain, so we tried to copy the chorus at the end of The Doors' "Wintertime Love".'"

The Sunday Times ('Books of the Year')

"The picture it paints of Cope as a crazed and self-loathing Blakean rocker, torn between his delight in the rock satyricon and his wish to hide at his parents' home in Tamworth, is an appealing one ... a marvellously bittersweet evocation of college days, through to the final lurid collapse of The Teardrop Explodes, a group whose joyous and celebratory weirdness was one of the best things about the post-punk era. It's one of the best, most vibrant memoirs of punks' culture-distorting force yet produced ... An eye-opening and indispensable read for any fan of Cope or The Teardrop Explodes, *Head-On* is also a fascinating bit of madcap social history: an account that anyone who remembers the claustrophobic hotchpotch of late '70s Britain and the subsequent ballyhoo of punk rock will relish."

Q

"Visceral, ballsy, bitchy, brutal, beautifully written. Book of the year. Made my heart burst."

Observer

"Buy it."

Melody Maker

Head-On was ITC Music Media Awards Book of the Year 1994.

HEAD ON

Memories of the Liverpool Punk-scene and the story of The Teardrop Explodes (1976-82)

JULIAN COPE

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The Cast of Head-On *in 1999 CE*

For Dave Balfe and Gary Dwyer

INTRODUCTION

I wrote this book in the spring and summer of 1989, when I was at war with Clive Banks, the then managing director of Island Records. Clive hated my just recorded *Skellington* album so much that he would not release it. I went into a sulk and refused to record any more music until *Skellington* was out. I needed to beat my blues, so Dorian bought a simple word processor and I poured all this information into it as quickly as I could - information from such a strange and distant Other Time that I lived the whole thing over again. Only this time I could escape when the nightmare got too out of hand.

Only a month into the writing of *Head-On*, my dear friend and brother Pete DeFreitas was killed on his motorbike at Rugeley, Staffs., on his way from London to Liverpool. At Pete's funeral, the young policeman who was first at the accident told me that the only map Pete had on him was a scrappy A4 sheet of paper with a hand-drawn map and instructions written by me. I had drawn the map nearly five years previously, when Dorian and I lived in Tamworth. Pete was only 27, yet had been the drummer with Echo & the Bunnymen since 1979. He died only two weeks after appearing in the video for my song 'China Doll', killed on the same motorbike that he rode in the film. His death shattered me and appears to have precipitated the complete change in direction which my life then took.

Since 1989, the whole world has changed. But I've reread this book and it's as clear as I'll ever get about that stuff. And it's not washing around in my brain anymore, which is a Major-League Vibe! So here 'tis!

Julian- Wessex, April 3rd 1994 CE

DOLPHINS- ON THE BRINK OF A DOUBLE-BUMMER

St. Ives Bay, Cornwall, Summer 1976

We were way out in the middle of the bay when the first dolphin broke the surface of the water. As he slid between us, my brother Joss stroked his tail and got dragged along and we were laughing and exhilarated. Then his mate came cruising and for a short while we were alone, the four of us under the sun.

God, some things are so incredible, but so unknown that they'll always be scary. These long suede submarines just below the surface of the water ... It was a trip. And swimming in deep water is a trip too. I don't mean 20 or 30 feet, I mean right out in the middle of an Atlantic Ocean bay.

I spent a lot of time floating in St. Ives Bay that summer. I was wondering what the hell was going on. This "A" level exam failure had spent the whole of his 18 years in Tamworth in the Midlands - it seemed like 18 years of faking it which were about to catch me up.

My parents had wanted me to go to Oxford University and become the new Charles Dickens. Anything less was inglorious failure. Anything at all, except maybe becoming Shakespeare. So I had wallowed in the vat of "potential" that all my teachers supposedly saw in me and hid that I wanted only to play music and hang around with the freaks. Earlier that summer, I'd walked into the kitchen to see my mother crying and saying to my father, "Oh, Alan ... What are we going to do with him?"

Oh. My exam results must have arrived. God, these people drive me crazy. They brought me up on reason - that once you find the reason, you'll see clear round the world. Well, I tried to understand them. Even harder, to respect them. But something always hauled me back - and kicking kicking kicking.

And so that summer of 1976 ended. But St. Ives Bay held my answer. My parents drove me crazy, but I saw clear round the world. And it wasn't me that found the reason. No, I was shown the reason. And swimming with the dolphins was swimming *next* to freedom...

BETWEEN THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION LIES A LIFETIME

Tamworth was in the grip of a dangerous malaise that had hung over it since 1946. Like the town in the famous sci-fi film *The Bodysnatchers*, its population had been replaced by clones. They all worked together, frantically trying to keep Tamworth in those good old post-war years. It galled me that I couldn't get to them. And I knew there was no point in trying. I decided to just do my time and hope that they didn't get me when I was asleep...

Every week Hutch and I would scan Lisa Robinson's 'New York' column in *Melody Maker* for sightings of all these weird sceneheads who had beamed down from another planet. Patti Smith and Lenny Kaye, Richard Hell, Tom Verlaine, the Ramones - these aliens, skinny and freaky-deaky, unconscious, unbelievable artist non-artists tripped my head and stuffed my head with 10 million dreams of this and that. Records? Nere. Didn 't have any - not by those people, anyway. Hutch had the Patti Smith LP but the rest of them scared us as much as they fascinated us. Not the music, but their SCENE ... And sometimes Iggy Pop was there. And so was Andy Warhol. And I felt that I should be there too. But how? I mean, everybody in Tamworth called me a queer - so that qualified me. But how do I get to be interesting enough?

Resisting your influences is like walking over a minefield. You do all you can to keep out of their way, but every so often one blows up in your face and you just have to embrace it.

At age 15, I was Andrew Marvell and John Donne.

Aged 16, I was Jim Morrison in those leathers on the front of The Doors' *Absolutely Live* LP.

And these past two years, I was T. S. Eliot and John Cale. And Hutch was Lou Reed circa *Berlin* and Todd Rundgren at any stage of his career. We both had girlfriends we adored and the beermonsters *still* called us a couple of puffs. Mind you, we had fallen into a particularly cissified Daryl Hall & John Oates period these past six months...

And now I was off to some crap Liverpool college full of "A" level failures trying to continue some kind of higher education no matter what. To Hutch, I was leaving in triumph - I was getting out of Tamworth and that was enough. But I was scared stiff. What if I'm Billy Liar? What if I just fuck up totally and have to come home? People knew me as a psycho in Tamworth, but what if? And so the summer of 1976 ended, the "what ifs" still ringing in my ears...

The drive up to college was like some high -speed funeral procession, my mother alternately wringing her hands in grief and gnashing her teeth or relating for the umpteenth time how wonderful her college life had been. Joss and I sat in the back of the car, as we'd done since we were babies.

"Still, he's not actually going to be in Liverpool, more on the outskirts. And most of the other students are teacher training types, so we won't have the old problems."

It was true. C. F. Mott College wasn't in Liverpool, not even in fucking Liverpool. Yeah sure, it looked like Liverpool on my father's *AA Road Map of the British Isles*, but on closer inspection, it was in a place called Prescot about 12 miles out of the city centre. That was like being in Watford and calling it London. Or being in Walsall and calling it Birmingham. Or being in East Berlin and calling it fucking West Berlin.

Why was I never in the centre of things? Everybody looked like total hicks and I mean total - Fruit-of-the-Loom sweatshirts and real-ale badges were all I could see. September 1976 was an uncool place to be in any case, but this place? This was my new home where I would flower and grow? I felt more repressed at that moment than at any time I'd experienced before. I could feel the prejudices seeping out of every pore. I always seemed to be watching ... nobody would actually invite me in.

We drove in silence out of the college grounds, my father following instructions handwritten by a lecturer. Just to rub it in, I was expected to live off campus. I had qualified late at C. F. Mott College, Prescot, which meant I was excluded from their scene - instead I was going to stay with some family I didn't know.

After about five minutes, it seemed we were driving even further out of Liverpool. We passed through streets full of building societies and old town halls.

"It looks quite nice, darling," suggested my mother, as a fog of all-pervading gloom swirled around the car. We followed the instructions on to the M57 and the signs for St. Helens. My God, we were miles out. We drove and we drove and, finally, off the motorway we came. The conurbation was set out in front of us "like a patient etherised upon a table".

The Coopers' house was like any other in Whiston: large, double-fronted and with an entry between every other house. At one time, each had a small garden but, for most, this was now concreted over, just a place for two dustbins and a bicycle leaning against the front window.

We stayed in the car whilst my father rang the doorbell and a gaunt Irish-looking man opened the door.

"Mr Cooper?" asked my father.

"Yes," came the reply.

My father signalled to us and we reluctantly got out of the car. Joss and I struggled with my bags, but my mother was already mooching around inside to see what her child was heading for.

The long hot summer of 1976 was famous at the time. And unlike previous summers, it had had the good grace to stretch onwards into September. All this made entering the Coopers' house even more daunting. From the sticky heat in the car, Joss and I made our way into the dim dank corridor of a mausoleum. The house was excruciatingly damp.

Mrs Cooper, a thin Irish-looking woman with skin drawn tightly over her cheekbones, welcomed us in. It was a look I would become used to over the years in Liverpool and even feel comfortable with but, here and now, my upbringing felt more middle class and isolated than ever.

Up the wide and worn and creaking staircase, the handrail was a vicious mid-blue over what had been polished dark wood, visible underneath from

bumps and furniture removals. At the top was a shaft of brilliant light. Joss and I turned right into the huge bedroom. There were three enormous old single beds in a row along the near wall. In the middle of the opposite wall, a large and filthy fireplace. To each side of this were jerrybuilt fitted cupboards, handpainted with one coat of white gloss. Inside the shelves were unpainted wood with dirty newspapers on top, held down by drawing-pins as a temporary cover. But temporary like prefab houses - made to last a month and still there 20 years later.

Mr Cooper was beaming great smiles at my father, who nodded and chatted sheepishly. Joss sat at the end of the bed nearest the window and looked out. The sun poured in, clouded with dust, like it does in old houses, and I knew that I was seeing the room in its very best light. This was as good as it got.

In Grandma Cope's house, the air was dry, even in the room which wasn't used. When it was cold, it was a healthy cold. But this house was damp. The kind of damp that makes you wake up in the middle of the night sweating, only you realise it's not sweat.

Mr Cooper finally and graciously left. He seemed like a nice man. Probably a nice man who knew the people in his bedroom were thinking the very worst. We heard his steps at the bottom of the stairs and all looked at each other.

"Alan, he's not staying here. He's going to catch pneumonia."

I didn't say anything. I knew I had to stay, at least for tonight. I'd do what I always did - let my parents get me out of this one. And they would, like they always did.

We sat around for about an hour, not saying much. Then Joss got up. His jeans were soaking around his ass and all down his legs. I knew it was time for them to go and I made it easier for them than I wanted. We all hugged and kissed and hugged some more.

"Don't worry, boy. We'll sort this out in no time," my father said calmly.

I stood at the top of the stairs and watched them. Normally I would walk to the car with them, then wave frantically until they were out of sight. Now,

I just walked to the dusty Victorian sash window and drew back the net curtain laden with greenfly.

As they drove slowly away, I raised my arm to make one dramatic drawn-out wave. My hand and wrist brushed against the glass and cleared an oily and dirty trail across the window. The car moved quietly out of sight and I was alone...

SING, OLIVER, SING!

I was born in late 1957 in my grandparents' house in South Wales. Deri was a tiny mining village whose houses and chapels clung tenaciously to the sides of its narrow U-shaped valley. Of all the steep, steep streets in Deri, Glynmarch was surely the steepest, two long rows of miners' houses which rose severely upwards at a 1 in 3 incline. And only two houses from the very top was no. 20, the home of my mother's family, the Todds.

I was a late baby. Very late indeed. When my mother had decided to go back to Wales to have me, neither she nor my father realised quite how long they would have to wait. For weeks, my father travelled back and forth from their home in Tamworth in the Midlands. Nineteen-fifties Britain had no motorways at all and the 120-mile drive could take five hours or more. So when they finally pulled me out kicking and screaming on Battle of Trafalgar Day, October 21st, everyone gave a sigh of relief.

"Good God," cried my still teenage Uncle Neil, "he's longer then Brian Price!" and ran out to tell everyone in the village. As Brian Price was the captain of the Welsh international rugby team and the previous longest baby born in Deri, this was no bad thing at all.

And so my life started amidst rejoicing and much love. And that was the way it stayed for 12 long years. I was brought up in Tamworth as a delicate gentle boy who loved his family dearly and wished only to please them.

And please them I did. I was Julian, the only boy in the neighbourhood with that name. And such a nice speaking voice I had, not like the rest of them.

When my mother went back to teaching, I spent every day with Grandma Cope, whom I adored. Grandma was as tough as old boots. She'd brought up my father on the widow's pension due to her after my grandfather had died and had run the NAAFI canteen in Two Gates during WW2. All the artillery and troop movements from London up to the north west would take the famous A5, the ancient and Roman Watling Street which cut through the heart of England at Two Gates, two miles out of Tamworth. And when Grandma Cope took me with her to collect her pension, all the

old ladies at the Two Gates post office would say, "Ooh, doon't 'e talk loovly?" And Grandma Cope would beam with pride.

Then, when I was four, my brother Joss was born. And for a while I was a little resentful. Not too bad, though. I was the firstborn and I had the confidence, so I was the one who got to sing songs for the family and get all the praise and the special comments. But I was a nervous child. When my best friend, Paul Hill, had his fifth birthday party, mine was the only mother there - I just couldn't bear her to be out of my sight.

I adored my mother. She was a goddess - so beautiful and perfect that other women paled beside her. Her hair was black and her lips were full and bright red and she wore tight sweaters to show off her fabulous figure. She hated birds and insects, so I hated them too. She drank her tea black and weak, so I considered women who drank tea with milk to be of a lower social order. And all the men loved her and wanted her, but my father had her and that made me proud as proud.

Then, on my ninth birthday, October 21st 1966, there was a dreadful mining disaster at Aberfan colliery in South Wales. The slag-heap which had been pronounced dangerous by countless safety officers finally collapsed and buried the village school. One hundred and sixty-six children my age were killed and the pain was doubly felt as Deri, my birthplace (and second home), was only four miles away from Aberfan and a very similar mining village. The TV cameras and the wailing of mothers and the desperation of so many mining communities thanking good fortune that it was not their disaster ruined my birthday for years. I thought constantly of those dead children and became a very serious child.

In photographs as a 10, 11 and 12 year old, I appeared prissy and earnest. Life was a dreadful and serious thing. My Grandfather Cope had died when my father was aged 11 and I feared that history would repeat itself unless God was thanked daily. I often stood for hours gazing out of the back bedroom window in my grandparents' house in Deri. I thought about the Aberfan disaster constantly and prayed that my father would not die. Sometimes it became like a sick obsession - I could hear little devils calling, "He's going to die, he's going to die," and I would shut my eyes

tightly and my nice middle-class mind would scream inside, "Bloody God ... Bloody God!"

Perhaps I would have remained that way, were it not for something that happened just a few years later...

It's April 1970 and I'm surrounded by boys much older than me, all chanting and laughing and pushing and prodding me. I'm 12 years old and I'm thinking I may have made a big mistake. Six months ago, I had been asked to play Oliver Twist in the school's version of the musical. I had accepted and I was a success. Well, with my parents. And with the girls at school. And the teachers. Yes, I'm the pet of pretty much everybody in the school. Everybody, that is, except the guys, the dudes, the bad-ass mofos, the people who mean shit. So now I'm standing in the middle of a group of heavy 15 year olds all chanting, "Sing, Oliver, sing!" Every playtime it's the same - tears are running down my face and I'm trying my best to block out what is happening, to go back inside myself, to remove myself from this rude spectacle and watch quietly and calmly from within until these people perhaps get bored, realise that it's the same thing every day with this one and eventually go away...

But gradually I began to think differently. The bullying took its toll on me for a while until, one special, special day, I had a Blinding Flash. In the corridor and on my way to a geography class, I was again confronted by the whole "Sing, Oliver, sing" gang. Their leader walked up to me, pinched my ass and said, "Ooh, he's gorgeous ... Ay, Julie-Anne, you're gorgeous. Tell us how gorgeous you are ... Give us a kiss, Gorgeous . . . Give us a kiss, Gorgeous..."

So I did. In one blinding, earth-shattering moment, I threw my 12-year-old arms around his stupid 15-year-old neck, clung on for dear life and began to kiss. Kiss kiss kiss slobber kiss!!

In about 30 frenzied seconds, my weakness left me, never to return. The "Sing, Oliver, sing" gang stayed away from then on. *Everyone* stayed away. Keep back, he's weird.

Psychologically, I became so strong from that incident that it changed my life entirely. As time passed, I felt almost as though I had been saved -

saved from an early death and freed to run like a crazy wherever I wanted. By the time I was 14, I was totally free-spirited. I would conform only when rebellion over a situation could cause total sleeplessness in my mother.

And I was lucky. For mine was not a free spirit which had to prove itself. There was now no pressure felt to smoke or to take drugs. I had learned how to turn the wrath of tough Midland kids with strong ugly accents away from this smiling blond kid called Julian. After that, I was under no pressure to lose my "posh" accent or to conform in any way.

Those were my schooldays and they confirmed one vital piece of information: the way people see you is the way you really are.

ANARCHY IN THE UK

Brian Simpson was about 5'10" and slightly overweight. His hair was blue-black and his eyes were blue. He was young Oliver Reed as Bill Sykes and young David Bailey if he was played by Mel Gibson. Brian wore a ripped black T-shirt and straight black-worn-grey cotton drill pants. His shoes were black brothel creepers with faded lilac laces and he had an earring in his left ear. Girls flocked around him and real-ale rugby types hated but respected him. He was the coolest guy in college and the first true punk I knew. ..

It was November 1976 by this time and I'd found a group of music heads to hang out with. I'd stayed at the Coopers' house only one night before a friend of my parents drove me out of that place. Now I was just kind of dossing around people's rooms while I looked for somewhere of my own.

A guy called Chris Goodson became very special to me. He had a room on campus on the cool bottom floor of Prescot Hall. We'd spend hours talking about Can and Faust. And he had The Doors' albums and Love albums, and stuff that I'd never heard from the mid '60s. I heard *Goodbye and Hello* by Tim Buckley and *Electric Music for the Mind & Body* by Country Joe & The Fish. Nick Drake, Traffic, Funkadelic, who scared me, and very cool reggae. Even the sleeves of his Prince Far I albums looked a real heavy scene.

And on that floor I met other fuck-ups and reasonable people. Opposite Chris Goodson was Martin, a heavy-metal boy. Next to him was Ritchie Blofeld, who had Jeff Goldblum eyes and rocked himself to sleep at night. Ritchie was a totally sweet guy, even though his obsession with losing his virginity gave everyone sleepless nights. Next to Chris on the corridor was Pat Hickey, a very quiet and gentle boy who was totally hung up on his weird looks. He wasn't weird looking, of course - he really had a serene countenance, but what use was that?

So anyway, we'd all play our eclectic music to each other and think how cool we were and I'd see Brian the punk walking in from his lodgings with the first Modern Lovers LP and the Patti Smith album. He'd wear Richard Hell T-shirts and home-made reggae shirts. All I'd read about punk was

music press slag-offs and reviews of the audience violence. But Brian had *The Modern Lovers*? I loved that stuff but didn't even know it was punk.

One day, Chris took me to Candy's room on the eighth floor of Prescot Hall. Candy James was a year older than us and had the coolest room I'd seen in college. We sat around and listened to *Overnight Sensation* by The Mothers of Invention and everything was very laid back and grooving.

Then, after about five minutes, Brian Simpson walked in. He was a good friend of Candy's and slept with a girl on her floor. As soon as Brian opened his mouth I was entranced by him. He was from London and had followed the Sex Pistols all summer. Brian hated the Seditionaries side of it and was already wary that the punk thing would be ruined. Don't call it "punk", Brian said, that was just a press thing. The true punks never used the word. Also, said Brian, you don't need all the bullshit accessories. Look at Johnny Rotten. Just plain ripped jeans and ripped T-shirts. Brian said it was all attitude and facial expressions. And you had to look like that every day, not just changing to weird for weekends.

We talked about three hours constant. I had a huge crush on Brian from then on. He was turning me on to something very big. It sounded like some huge mythology that I was desperate to be a part of. Brian went to his girlfriend's room to get the *Ramones* album. Hutch and I had heard it in Birmingham that summer, but then it had just sounded jokey. It had reminded me more of The Banana Splits than a rock group - just cartoony. Even the Velvet Underground had songs and some of their music was really beautiful...

But now the Ramones sounded different. In Candy's room with a new attitude and understanding it was brilliant. The Ramones *tried* to make everything sound the same. It was a big joke *and* an art-trip. In Tamworth, we all played like Can because it was so easy to fake. It never changed because they were confident enough as musicians to play the same riff for hours. But the Ramones were different - they repeated themselves because that's all they were capable of. And that was a big, big difference.

So Brian Simpson laid it all out clearly for me.

And after that, things were not the same. It was October 1976 and more was happening. I was still stuck in college 12 miles from Liverpool, but now I had allies. We'd hang out in Candy's room and listen to John Peel sessions every night. It was the first term so we all had shit to do. Merely hanging out in Candy's room made a Lou Reed fan very happy.

Late October, we took a bus into Liverpool. We went to a store called Gimbles and I got my right ear pierced. I'd decided on the right one as that was a gay sign and I wanted to piss people off with my new bad attitude. Besides, Johnny Rotten had his right ear pierced.

We walked into Penny Lane Records and I freaked. Rows and rows of the coolest imports and weird stuff. And on the wall were lines of hip 45s. 'Little Johnny Jewel' by Television, 'Gloria' by Patti Smith on French import, Stooges bootleg eps and '30 Seconds over Tokyo' by Pere Ubu. I wanted everything and I could not wait. We looked through every record sleeve and just glowed. I was finally in Liverpool for real and maybe I could really be cool one day.

I saw weird-looking guys hanging around - some rock'n'roll, but some just weird. Zombie-like and deathly pale. And I was a farm-punk, with an earring, medium hair and flares. I was so freaked out. Shit, I'm not a weirdo at all. Bloody hell. I felt like ... what was all that shit I went through at school for? What would the heavies at my school have done to these guys?

I still agreed with Brian's idea of dressing simply but my head was totally done in by those people in Liverpool. I left with an MC5 45 called 'Borderline', a Snatch single and the first Richard Hell ep. It was all American - there was no English punk. Not yet. Brian bought nothing. He said he was waiting for the Sex Pistols' record. 'Anarchy in the UK' was due out next week.

BLINDING FLASHES

Once I heard this stuff, there was no going back. For about a year after October 1976 The Doors sounded muso, the Velvets sounded reasonable and Can sounded like hippies. I put on Television's 'Little Johnny Jewel' and couldn't believe that they had the nerve to record it. It made The New York Dolls sound like Yes - the bass had no bass, the guitars had no power at all and the singing was awful. In fact the whole record was awful. And epic. And completely brilliant and we never stopped playing it.

Candy's room became the home of this new scene and it would be the place I sorted myself out in the coming months. In one intense meeting with Brian Simpson, I'd been hit by a blinding flash: I was going to play punk music. I wasn't going to stay in some crap college. I was going to play punk music.

I always set great store by blinding flashes. They are those happenings you get all the time throughout childhood and your early teens. A blinding flash is that first instant when something that you had always accepted as a world truth was suddenly revealed as being false.

Those world truths hit you smack in the face when you're a kid, when things that seemed imperative can be destroyed by one smart Alec kid with an older brother or a know-it-all father. You know, you're arguing with your brother about what Thunderbird 2's maximum load would be and Steven Urbicki's dad up the road says it couldn't even fly in the first place because the wings are too small. Or you see a Minic International 500 electric slot-car racetrack on top of your parents' wardrobe all through December, then you receive it as a gift from ... Santa Claus on Christmas Day. In a blinding flash, the world has changed. And it will never be the same again.

And now I wanted to totally quit education. Brian Simpson had revealed that to me in a blinding flash.

CANDY'S ROOM

In November 1976, I moved into Candy James' room. I'd been away from home only six weeks but already it felt like years. I was a crazy man away from my parents and loving every single minute of it. I forgot about Tamworth and times past, and I forgot about Jane, my girlfriend of three years.

Candy and I loved to sleep together. There was nothing sexual - I was still getting over splitting with Jane anyway, but Candy was getting hassled by a guy called Murphy Philips. With me in her bed, it made things difficult for him.

We'd fool around with make-up and clothes, trying to work out some kind of style. The New York scene was really cool but we couldn't have long hair like Patti Smith and Lenny Kaye. It had to be more of a statement. One day I stood in front of Candy's mirror and chopped off my hair. It looked total shit. Not punky, not anything, but it was a start.

Then Caroline Coon's review of the Pistols' single came out. It sounded fantastic and the Pistols were like bedrock on every level. We rushed home and played it. And played it and played it.

Brian thought it was the best thing ever and I agreed. But inside I felt weird. I was disappointed, but I couldn't admit it. I wasn't cool enough in myself to say I preferred 'Little Johnny Jewel'. On Tony Wilson's *So It Goes* programme, before 'Anarchy' came out, the Pistols were brilliant and messy. On the B-side, 'I Wanna Be Me' was classic and shitty. But 'Anarchy in the UK' was too perfect.

As the only two punks in the college, things became a little strained. Brian and I both lived on the eighth floor of Prescot Hall, a girls' floor. We'd take baths together in the communal bathroom and wander round the corridors semi naked.

One time, we were drying off and dancing in the corridor. In the room next to Candy was a fat pretty girl, and her two dumpy mates sat in her room all day. They both fancied Brian and me, but Brian most of all. So he danced

up to their half-open door naked and pulled his foreskin back. As his dick started to grow he knocked on the door, which opened slowly.

I was totally into this, and amazed, too, as no way would I have been cool enough to do that. He stood there grinning and the three girls came slowly out of the room. One of the ugly friends made a grab for the dick and Brian flashed into Candy's room.

Another time I was having a shower and Brian was in the bath opposite. We were singing and then I started laughing so much that I needed to shit. I stood there in the shower and just did two shits straight off. The high pressure shower would break them up, I thought.

We carried on laughing and screaming, but the shit didn't move. It's weird really. You shit every day for years and years, but you never really know the true consistency. It never comes up until you're stuck in the shower with turds at your feet.

First I moved them gently with my toes to the plug-hole, then I so delicately began to tread them in. All this time, we were screaming and shouting, and girls wanted baths and I was up to my ankles in shit. The plug-hole was blocked and there was no way I could clear it.

"Candy!" I screamed and she came running. "I need your toothbrush."

Candy came running again, this time with her toothbrush. I prodded the shit down and eventually cleaned it all up. Twenty minutes of cleaning and there were no traces.

When we got back to the room, Candy said, "I worried that you'd clean the bathroom with it."

Brian and I smiled and I handed her the toothbrush. Candy was a sweetie.

DUDE RISING

After about a month at C. F. Mott, I noticed a girl walking around with the weirdest style. My friend, Paul Ellerbeck, said she looked like Brunhilda coming out of Valhalla. Her name was Hilary Steele and she came from Leeds.

She was bleached ash blonde with masses of make-up. Her hair was very long and she had all kinds of decorations in it. She had a strong Yorkshire accent and took no shit. When rugby students and the real-ale brigade laughed at her, she screamed her head off and threw things.

One day, Brian got talking to Hilary and she invited us to her room in Eccleston Hall. The room was brilliant and I freaked - she'd redecorated her room with real cool colours and had food and a coffee machine. On her wall was a picture of Johnny Rotten looking angelic. We hung out and had Earl Grey tea and biscuits. Brian and I never had money. We did, but it was all going on records.

I talked incessantly and felt completely uncool compared to Hilary and Brian. They were cool and I was a yokel - just a farm-punk. Still, I got on with Hilary better than Brian did and we started hanging out together.

There was no sex between us. It just wasn't there. But I loved being with a woman. I was missing Jane so much and I was proud to be seen with someone as far-out as Hilary. Or as hip. See, Hilary had been to Eric's. It was *the* Liverpool club. Brian and I had twice been into Liverpool but both times failed to find it. We'd already missed the Sex Pistols when they played. The second time, we missed the Stranglers. Now we knew someone who could take us there.

College was becoming unbearable and I didn't go to many lectures because there was too much going on. The drama classes were okay because it was the late seventies and all the lecturers were hippies. They'd just get us to pair off with a girl and curl up together in a corner. And drama classes had the best looking trippiest girls.

I'd pair off with Mary Ozanne and we'd fool around all afternoon. Then class would end and we'd go to her room and fool around in her bed. I

thought she was very great looking - pale, pale skin and very blonde hair. We didn't have any kind of relationship, really, just around drama classes.

Being one of two punks increased my popularity with the real snotty women. But Brian and I were objects of total derision if we ate in the canteen and hung out in the college bar. We didn't have to do anything, just be there. I still looked like complete shit, but weird enough to piss off the rugby types. So Brian and I would neck with each other for the good of our cause and set fire to T-shirts we were wearing - until I wore a college T-shirt I'd nicked. When I set fire to that, the beermonsters threw us both into the biology pool, which was half full of broken beer glasses. I wasn't badly cut, but enough for me to feel martyred.

By the end of 1976 I was working towards some kind of look. All I knew had been learned from Brian and I found it increasingly hard to get anywhere on my own. I didn't feel right, but at least I felt that I was on the way *somewhere*.

I wasn't with any particular girl at this time - I wasn't interested. The Jane thing had messed me up inside. There was a weird sweet girl called Julia who was out in lodgings. Candy was away for the weekend and had offered her room 819 without telling me. Anyway, one night I came back from Eric's and walked into Candy's room. It was about 3.30 a.m. and I was surprised to find Julia there. But I was knackered and I didn't care.

I got in bed. I'd met Julia before, briefly, and as the bed was a single, it was inevitable we were about to meet again. But in bed with someone else, I wasn't comfortable. I'd developed some dubious habits in Candy's room. Like I always pissed into an empty milk-bottle and when it was full, I would hold it out of the eighth-floor window and let go. I'd just tell Candy it was punk and she'd be into it.

But lying in bed with Julia, I felt edgy. She was tiny, a very small frame and this tiny ass. I wouldn't have been interested had I met her normally, but she felt great. Lying on our sides, facing each other, we started talking. She had a pout when she talked and that got to me. We were talking with our mouths touching, very quietly, and our tongues would touch the other's lips. It was about 4.30 a.m. My dick was rigid, as flat against my belly as my dick gets. Julia pushed her stomach against me and rubbed up and

down with it. She had a ridiculous baby-doll nightie on and I pulled her on top of me. Now she was sitting across me and I put my right hand between her legs. I'd never felt any girl so wet. In the half-light, I tipped her onto her back and pushed my face between her legs. It felt as though she was foaming and she made little gasps as I lapped her up. She was way skinny and seemed more like a little animal than a young woman.

About a half hour later, she got up exhausted and shattered. She sat cross-legged on the bed, her hair soaking, her fringe over her eyes, no clothes, just a skinny waif. Then she looked up mid-smile and purred over to me on all fours, like a cat, sniffing around my ass and my legs. I was lying on my back, totally obliterated. My dick was no longer hard, it was just being there. And this little cat-girl sniffed around me then took my head in her mouth while I was still soft. She didn't use her hands at all. It was all mouth and angles.

That night, Julia blew and blew until I couldn't come anymore and then we slept till two in the afternoon. It was the start of an oral affair. We didn't hang out together. We just gave each other head. Sometimes we'd meet in corridors and get too turned on and have to sneak to someone's room. It only lasted about two months, but it was so cool.

ERIC'S AND THE ORIGINS OF THE LIVERPOOL SCENE

I spent Christmas 1976 in Tamworth with my family. My mother took my appearance to be the end of her son. I spent the whole holiday with my brother Joss, who was still 15. I told him my cool stories and we would go out with a spray gun and paint names and slogans everywhere. I sprayed "Hi" on people's garages as I figured you couldn't be pissed off by that.

But Tamworth itched me. I'd come back too soon and I'd seen Jane and that did my head in. I felt like a kid again and I wanted to feel cosmopolitan, like I was beginning to feel in Liverpool. Jane knew I was coming home and so she went out with my friend Cott and screwed the ass off him because she knew my heart would break. And it did. And I went back to Liverpool and tried to forget it.

It was freezing. January 1977 in Liverpool was ice and wind. The Damned were playing Eric's in two days. I went to an Army & Navy and got my first drainpipe jeans for a pound. They were in a skip on the ground floor full of jeans and pink T-shirts. The T-shirts were 30p so I bought one. Back at college, I wondered what to wear. Brian lent me a leather jacket and at least I had drainies, but my hair was still shit. Maybe we'd be the coolest. Ho-hum.

Eric's club was in Mathew Street, opposite where the Cavern used to be. Next to it was a pub called the Grapes where everyone went. You'd go there before Eric's but we didn't know this yet. The Grapes was full of scene characters that I wanted to know. One day. But now I was a nervous farm-punk and everyone seemed a million miles away.

The other end of the street was Probe Records. I hadn't been in, though. We didn't even know this area until Hilary took us. The whole place was loaded with incredible atmosphere - really loaded. People knew their shit and that made it more scary 'cause I was used to weirdos but not ones who looked so weird.

We walked into Eric's and I loved it. Hilary looked right. Brian looked right. I looked shite. But it didn't matter and I didn't care. I just loved it. In Tamworth I was a weirdo, but look at these people. They looked off their heads.

Eric's was a basement, a real basement with bass that climbed round the walls. That first night, they played 'Great Stone' by King Tubby and I hung out by the DJ. I didn't speak right away as he was transfixed, a guy about 38 with old, old clothes and a moustache. Right after King Tubby came 'Tail Dragger' by Howlin' Wolf, then 'Roadrunner', then 'Ask the Angels' by Patti Smith.

Finally I plucked up the courage to talk to the DJ. He was Roger Eagle. He ran the club. He had been born only for music and I couldn't tell whether he liked or hated me. But he talked to me and that was enough.

There was a jukebox in the other room. The records were the coolest I'd ever seen on a jukebox. It had Bo Diddley, Captain Beefheart, 'Louie Louie' by The Kingsmen, '96 Tears'. It was such a trip hearing these songs blasting out across the bar, with the PA blasting a completely different song in the other room. Roger Eagle could do no wrong.

Hilary and Brian were talking to some weird-looking people. An overweight girl, who was poured into her black outfit, was with the faggiest guy I'd ever seen. Both of them had bottle-black hair, white theatre make-up and bondage clothes. The girl was really sexy and her name was Lyn. The guy was beautiful and he was Peter Burns.

In Tamworth, I'd been considered a faggot asshole, not because I was gay but because of my manner, my name and my accent. Now it was turned around. I looked at them spellbound. This was the Liverpool I wanted. This was stuff that turned my head upside-down. I'd spent my childhood thinking bad, bad things every day. It had made me sick and it had made me determined. But now, I looked at these people and I thought, Fuck, I was right all along. I should have gone further. I should have walked around Tamworth like these people.

Peter and Lyn Burns were the first real "scene" people that I had come into contact with. They were both 17 and I loved them right away. In 1976, anyone who dressed weird was, normally, just a Bryan Ferry head or a Bowie head, weekend dickheads with white suits and old Steve Harley albums. But this was freakstuff.

I felt so overawed the first time at Eric's that I just sat and smiled. Sure, there were 90% uncool people in the club, but that night I felt like the uncoolest. In Tamworth, I'd been hip as hell. In college, I could piss everyone off. But here? I knew it was gonna take me a long while to make any mark. I could never get close to Peter Burns' act. I couldn't try. All I knew was I would look different next week.

THE SHOP IN CASEY STREET

Peter and Lyn Burns had a shop in Casey Street, a cobbled street in the centre of town. Up three flights of stairs, above a printer's or something like that. They sold shit punk clothing and some okay stuff. The shop was decorated thus: huge black PVC dustbin liners all over the wall and ceiling. Very *Daily Mirror* punk. But they had this side to them and I thought it was cute. At one end was a rail of tatty coloured string jumpers and a few sub-Seditionaries T-shirts with slogans like "Fuck your mother and don't run away". Then another rail of leatherette skirts and pants. At the far end of the shop was a large armchair and a couch at right angles to it.

The psychology was incredible. You'd walk in to be confronted with all these clothes, then have to run the gauntlet of the Peter Burns barbed comment as you walked the full length of the shop to pay him. I was lucky - I already knew him through Hilary - but he'd reduce young punks to jelly.

"What are you buying that for? It's crap." He holds the offending garment at arm's length and looks round to the supply of Safeway's and Tesco's carrier bags. He plops it into a bag and scowls at the kid, a look of unremitting contempt. And all the time, Lyn sits in the huge armchair, knitting. In fact, it seems like Lyn spent the whole of punk knitting. She reminded me of the women who sat at the foot of the guillotine – but painted and decadent in a big sexy way.

Peter Burns would never wear clothes from his shop. He and Lyn would be out with us sometimes and they'd see someone wearing their clothes.

"Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. The state of her," Peter would cackle, in his camp posh-Scouse whinny.

We'd meet kids in the shop we had nothing in common with, except for our attitude. A young girl called Cathy Lynch, with bleached white hair cut close to her head, like a pixie. And an outfit she had to be strapped into. She'd sit next to Lyn, staring straight ahead, being very sweet but always down. A guy would leave the shop to a Burns insult and Cathy would whisper a special, personal insult of her own to him. You'd never hear what

it was and she'd never offer it. I really liked Cathy, but I never knew her well.

Then, about three years later, she got raped in her flat by two black guys. They locked her boyfriend in another room. After that, she didn't survive. One morning, a guy found her in Lodge Lane dead. She had jumped out of a 14th-floor window in the block of flats where she lived.

Then I met Boxhead. Boxhead was a Ted. He was 15 and he hung around the shop. I'd say, "Hey, Boxhead, why aren't you in school today?" and Box would say, "Oh I say, why are you not at school, Boxhead?" in the poshest, most upper class voice he could think of. So that's how I sounded to some people.

If you gave Boxhead a pound and a Marks & Spencer's carrier bag, he'd fill it for you. Everybody did it. Marks was only 50 yards away and he'd come back with cool shit, like Ocean pies and real upmarket stuff. And he never got caught.

I liked Boxhead. He looked like one of those Scots footballers who play for Man. Utd - small and wiry. And he always made an entrance. If you were leaning over the counter in Probe, you'd feel the sinking of teeth into your ass, or your pants would start smouldering, and you knew it was Boxhead. Almost no-one else had that greeting.

I was starting to see less and less of Brian Simpson. As the punk thing expanded, it seemed he was losing interest. I felt like we'd exhausted our clique. I needed to meet more people. Even if they spoke shit, I felt I needed to hear it.

So Brian stopped coming into town. I felt really sad. This was going to be a trip and I wanted people I liked to be in on it. I'd phone Hutch in Tamworth and get him to come up and stay. My brother would come up and party all night. Eric's was now a two or three nights a week thing. I was still officially in college, so my parents were giving me money. We'd be in college in the early week, just hanging out in Candy's or Hilary's rooms. Chris Goodson was into the punk thing in theory, but he thought the look was crap. I played him the Television LP. I'd borrowed an import copy from a guy and kept it 'till it came out in Britain.

A lot of British stuff was already starting to sound like shit. The Vibrators and Ultravox were prime examples. They were just rock with a new name and sung in David Bowie's "European guy" voice. Bleep Bleep.

Hilary started going out with a guy called Paul Simpson. The first time I saw him I thought he was a big nance, with his cool '50s suit with acid burns all over it. But it soon seemed we had a lot in common. One day, I went over to Hilary's and this Paul Simpson guy was there. I'd seen him around but never talked - I'd prejudged him as a fashion punk. Anyway, Paul carried with him a classic photo of a group called Tiger Lily. This was Ultravox two years before. They had long Cockney Rebel hair and big flared suits. The singer, John Foxx, was still using his own name, Dennis Leigh, and they had a song called 'Monkey Jive'.

If you're surprised at my remembering all this shit, you have to understand that my entire friendship with Paul Simpson began with our mutual hatred of fake punk groups. So getting the goods on Ultravox started a long friendship. We all loved Patti Smith and 'Gloria' was by now an anthem. The *Marquee Moon* LP by Television was a classic and so was the *Modern Lovers* album. But British music still had miles to go.

It was April 1977. Hilary and I started hitching around to see gigs. London, Birmingham, Leeds. Everything was starting to get good.

BEING SUCKED IN

Candy's room was becoming a haven for the college trash. There were more art types than I'd expected and one day I arrived to find a guy in my bed, well, in Candy's bed. And he stank. "Um, um, er, Candy wasn't here so I let myself in. I, er, I, er, I live in Rainhill, my name's Paul."

As unprepossessing a sight as he was, Paul Ellerbeck was about to become a good friend and a big influence. He was tall and skinny, with the most upper middle class manner I'd ever seen. He'd start every sentence with "Um, um, er" and carry on some lengthy discussion, normally about art or music. He had a huge black portfolio with him and we soon discovered that we were both John Cale-heads. I'd seen Cale in 1974 in Birmingham. What an event! His whole group is grooving like crazy as the lights go down. Cale walks on in all-black leathers. His first solo tour ever. He sits at the piano, prepares himself and ... sings completely the wrong lyric, screams "FUUUCK" and rushes offstage. It's 15 minutes before he can be persuaded back.

Paul Ellerbcck was just a natural punk. He didn't try at all. In fact he didn't care at all. His hair was matted and fair and greasy. Not over greasy naturally, just through not washing. He wore straight cream Marks & Spencer's summer pants ingrained with dirt and a sweaty T-shirt, ribbed like those high street store cotton and rayon tops. He had a foul raincoat, each pocket bulging with pens, chequebook and card, keys and cash. Also his address book, which was tiny and made tinier through forcing it into no space at all.

I told him about my quest for total hipness and he said he was into the same thing. Paul Ellerbeck looked exactly like Subway Sect's singer, Vic Goddard. Only he'd got there on his own. He opened his portfolio and took out *Another Green World* by Eno and a copy of *Trout Mask Replica* by Captain Beefheart - instant friendship. Back in Tamworth, only the coolest could take *Trout Mask*. It bore no allegiance to any other music but itself. All the hippies found it impenetrable.

In Candy's room, Paul got turned on to the whole punk thing, but from our angle. And that was the point - forever talking and honing the angle down.

Every time you'd explain it to someone, your own head would get a clearer view as well.

For all that punk meant to us, in *Melody Maker* and *NME*, 1977 was mainly headlines about Gentle Giant gigs and the new albums by ELP or Genesis. Nick Kent had these blazing articles about Iggy, but most journalists were fucking up, glamorising the violence and missing the direction.

See, unlike most social phenomena, all the punk violence was directed at itself. People weren't hurting others - they were hurting themselves to get at others. That's why I dug it so much. It was just like my cutting myself at school. It was saying, "You want to hurt me? Well, fuck you. And fuck your friends, too, because I can hurt me more than you could ever hope to." Ugly girls got into punk. Instead of waiting to become the bait of lager-swilling A-holes, they painted their faces like masks and said, "Yeah, I'm ugly, I'm weird looking. And isn't it great?" The school faggots got into it because it screamed loud into the ears of the rugby boys. It embarrassed the fuck out of straights just to know that there were people out there who were so totally alive that they needed to wear such weird shit.

And that was punk. Unconfident and undefined and incredibly powerful. It was weak guitar sounds and repetition. Laughing at itself way before anybody else could laugh at it. And Paul Ellerbeck was as much a punk as Brian Simpson or Peter Burns, but very, very different. And that intrigued me. I started to feel less like a farm-punk and more like myself.

Back at school when I was 15 we had a group. Max played guitar and Gary Norris played drums and I sung, as I couldn't play anything. We were doing a gig and we had no bass player, so Kevin Plater, a guy we called Spud, bought a bass and faked the entire gig. When it came to the bass solo in 'My Generation', Spud just ran his fingers up the neck and pumped his right hand at double-speed. Everybody laughed, including the group, but four years later I still remembered it as a monument of cool.

And so it was that Paul Ellerbeck did join us and become known to our scene. Only, because Paul never washed and always wore the same clothes, he became known as "Smelly Elly". And as I got to know Smelly Elly

better, I noticed certain repellent sides to his character. Like he would arrive but never leave.

One time, in March 1977, I'd hitched all over to see gigs in London and Leeds and I was staying in Tamworth and trying to patch up my relationship with my parents, which was falling to pieces, and my mother wasn't talking to me and all this miserable stuff. Out of the blue, Smelly Elly called and needed a place to stay on his way to Liverpool. "Mmm, umm, uhm, er, Julian? I'm in a phone box in, uhm, Hendon. I'm hitching up to see you, so stay by the phone and I'll keep you informed where I am." And he was gone. I spent that night asleep on the couch next to the phone. "Hi, I've come 10 miles." "Hi, I'm nearly in Rugby." No-one would give him a lift. The next morning, I found Smelly Elly at a roundabout walking in the wrong direction. He stayed for three days.

Joss and my father were laying turf one morning when Smelly Elly finally surfaced and my mother made him a huge breakfast. He walked out into the garden and shouted to my father; "I'd give you a hand, Mr Cope, but I didn't bring any old clothes."

He just stood there stinking in these shitty rags.

My mother adored him and gave him loads of my father's Marks & Spencer's tops and summer slacks. He went upstairs, had a bath and came down with some of the new stuff on.

He looked exactly the same. Exactly. Paul Ellerbeck had totally his own style.

Women don't much like smelly men unless they are really cute. And even then, they'd prefer them to wash. The hip middle classes dabble in dirt. They think dirty means no money, which is supposed to be hip. They're so fucking guilty, they think debasing themselves in squats is like helping Mother Teresa.

Both of my parents' families were poor, really poor, and all I got from them was cleanliness is next to godliness. We don't own anything but what we have sparkles. So when someone comes into your house and puts their muddy feet on your furniture, or eats like a fucking pig, tell them to get

their act together and grow up. That's the middle classes. I know because I am one.

WHAT'S HIP AND WHAT SHOULD NEVER BE

It was spring 1977 and my hair was coming together slowly. I wore fucked and faded black or blue torn Levis, an assortment of home-made screen-printed shirts and shitty faded sneakers. I'd tried wearing a noose around my neck, but that looked like London affectation. I'd seen pictures of London punks with johnnies hanging from their ears and fake wounds. It may have started there, but the northern thing seemed far truer to the attitude. London was getting more *Rocky Horror* and less Stooges every day.

Probe Records in Whitechapel was becoming more and more a scene focal point. But hang ups still had everyone keeping to their own cliques. It seemed like every clique thought they were the coolest and didn't want to be found out.

Geoff Davies ran Probe. He was about 34 with a dead friendly face and the acid tongue of life. One day, we were just hanging around Probe and a young heavy-metal boy walked in.

"Have you got the new Rush album?"

"What?" said Geoff, affronted.

"Er, have you got the new Rush album, please?"

"Yeah ... why?" Geoff leaned over the counter, glowering.

The whole shop stopped. We all looked down in embarrassment for the boy. But he carried on. "Er, could I 'ave it then?"

Geoff Davies surfed in on his reply. "No, you fucking can't have the new Rush album. Where d'you think you are, Virgin Records?"

The beaten boy looked quickly round and walked out of Probe. We watched him negotiate the steps, as a quarter of Probe's customers fell down them at least one time. Then we all looked back at Geoff.

Norman, Geoff's assistant, said, "Oh, Geoff won't sell stuff he thinks is shit. He has to stock it 'cause of the deal with the distributors. If I'd been

alone, I'd have sold the kid his Rush album."

So Geoff Davies was the coolest. Another person I had to know. And Probe Records began its reputation for not suffering fools gladly. In fact, it suffered many fools, but the kind that normally got kicked out of record shops.

Roger Eagle had played a compilation of New York stuff called *Live at Max's Kansas City*. He'd return to a song called 'Final Solution' over and over. In the quest for faster and faster punk, many people were getting blinded. But my idea of punk changed every day. I decided to buy 'Final Solution', a big decision as it was only on import. I paid over the £1.50 and was handed this 7" black-labelled hip-beyond-hip slice of garbage-metal. I held it in both hands and studied the label. It said "Hearthan Records" in silver lettering and the group name: PERE UBU. As a drama student, I'd already read the plays. I'd already dug old Pa Ubu, the character who bustled around with the squeaky voice and the weird kitchen appliances. Alfred Jarry, who wrote the Ubu plays, looked like Charles II and his work seemed to exist in no particular time.

When I was back in Candy's, I played 'Final Solution' over and over and over. There were no real chords. The bass held it together and that was only with three notes. The music burned from the souls of numb-people. It sounded like it was from deep in the interior of some continent I needed to visit.

The other side, 'Cloud 149', was a different trip. At first, I mistakenly took it as a pop song. Of course, it wasn't, but following 15 repeats of the A-side, it at least seemed as though real humans had recorded it.

And so began my obsession with Pere Ubu and the new American art-fuck sound. Television and Patti Smith were gods in my eyes. If a group sounded as though they could play, I'd find myself switching off. I introduced punk to various people in precisely the way I saw it. I pinned the Pere Ubu single on the wall - it was a sign of hipness only I could enjoy. It even looked alien, no centre, like an old juke-box 45, and writing credits with weird names.

By late April, all the English groups had their albums out. They had either already fucked up or were getting big. The Stranglers were uncool, but I liked their uncoolness for a little while, and they did sound like an American West Coast group. Most people said The Doors, but Roger Eagle told me that they were more like The Music Machine or The Seeds. I knew The Seeds' 'Pushin' Too Hard' from the *Nuggets* album but I'd have to wait till later to investigate properly.

All that was left, now, was the Clash. The first single was 'White Riot' – just a tinny Glitter-stompf and football-fan vocals. I was disappointed. I expected something more. But I didn't know what. There was tremendous peer pressure to like the Clash. They'd been around for ages but played nowhere. The album came out mid-April. You had to buy an early copy to get the red sticker. Then you sent the red sticker to *NME* and they sent you a limited 'Capital Radio' single with no sleeve.

It seemed like every week you had to dig deep to find cash for some record that no-one could be without and maintain any credibility. Peer pressure. All the bloody time. It put me off the Clash album. How could you enjoy something when you had to have the free accessory that took weeks to come? Besides, the Stranglers had done the same thing and been royally slagged off for it. Ah, but the Clash were different from everyone else. I could see that, but it still pissed me off.

The Ramones were God, of course. Without them we'd have all been stuck in flares still. In April 1977, they played Eric's with Talking Heads supporting. 'Love Goes to Building on Fire' was Talking Heads' debut single. Everyone dug it and the club was packed. Talking Heads just kind of shambled on and did their thing. Then came the Ramones. The lights went down and they were there. I was standing to the right, in front of Dee Dee. 1-2-3-4 Vvvvrowwwmmmm. Into 'Blitzkrieg Bop', 1-2-3-4, into 'Beat on the Brat', 1-2-3-4, 'Surfin' Bird', 1-2-3-4, 'Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue'... It was incessant. On record, the Ramones were cartoons. They had a kind of weak sub-metal Spector vibe. But on stage? Dee Dee just kept on coming with those 1-2-3-4s. He held the show together. The Ramones were a paramilitary operation, like funny terrorists. For 'Pinhead', out came a placard with "Gabba-Gabba Hey". Now, only the Ramones could get away with this, and even they were pushing it.

After that, I had no real wish to play fast thrash. The Ramones had done it. All you could do was go faster. So what? Musically, it was fundamentalism. You add one guitar solo and the whole trip falls down. Of course, they never would - the Ramones were perfect.

A GUY CALLED LAWRENCE GETS HIS

One weekend, Eric's was not open and I was at a major loose end. I went into town with Smelly Elly and Hilary and bought *Nuggets*, a psychedelic-punk compilation of '60s weird stuff that Lenny Kaye had put together. We arrived back in Prescot Hall and got a scene going in Candy's room.

I went down to see Chris Goodson and the others on the ground floor, but they had gone to some disco in the main hall to cop off. Back in Candy's room, we decided we needed beer and so Brian and I went up to the disco.

Weekends in Studentland just blew my mind. Hideous hordes of alcohol blind knobhounds stumbled around the campus pawing at each other. These people never went into Liverpool - they stayed on campus getting pissed for the three whole years of their course.

One guy, a Welsh student called Lawrence, was obnoxious to me. He had been for a while. He'd call out in the canteen about faggots and what should be done with them. Then he'd comment about punk being a rich-kid thing. Even his mates thought he was a plank, but he mouthed off all the time. Ignoring him made it worse, but I'd only allow myself a terse "Suck shit, Lawrence" and hope he would shut the fuck up. I wasn't there enough for it to affect me but we got enough shit in the street without some half-assed student heaviness.

We walked out of Prescot Hall into the semi-darkness of the college drive. The building was surrounded by trees and to the side was a playing field. I had 'The Night Time is the Right Time' by The Strangeloves stuck in my head. I'd first heard Roger Eagle play it at Eric's and since it was on the *Nuggets* LP we'd played it over and over that night.

Brian was wearing his burned college shirt and black jeans. I had on torn faded drainpipes and a cotton long-sleeved shirt, originally white but screen printed over with factory shapes in red and yellow. On the breast pocket was a cloth Lenin patch. I wore it with the sleeves rolled part way up and the shirt-tail out over my ass. My hair was natural blond and spiky with gel and hairspray.

Walking up the driveway towards the disco, I had a real attitude. A *real* attitude. I felt too good for the place and we were doing a favour even walking around. I couldn't wait to get out of there, but while I was here I was going to piss people off.

"I want to be-ee with you, in the night time."

A girl called Lesley walked up to us. She was very good looking in a snotty, haughty kind of way and men enjoyed her presence but she had a way of scaring them off. She joined us as we walked up the road, then she whispered to me, "I've got suspenders on." I shifted in my jeans and we carried on walking.

The college hall entrance was awash with piss-head students doing their ungainly piss-head thing. I stayed outside and talked dirty with Lesley, and Brian went inside to pick up some beer. We waited around under the awning of the hall. It was one of those '60s buildings, all concrete and glass, and the awning was supported by two painted metal struts. They were rusty in places, where the paint had flaked off. I leaned against one of them and it left a brown line on the back of my shirt.

Brian was taking ages and it was cold out in the darkness. In the hall, the disco played 'If You Leave Me Now' by Chicago and I thought about the Chicago guy who had accidentally shot himself. Then out of the hall came Lawrence and his little gang of buddies, all ready for a cosmopolitan night out at the scout-hut. They walked towards us and I thought, Don't say anything, Lawrence, knowing his reason for living was to bait me. As they trooped past us, each one seemed to beam us a gawky, nervous smile - except Lawrence.

"Alright, Punky? Are yew goying to grayce us with yoor presence?" came the boorish Welsh drone.

I laughed. It was the way he called me "Punky". That was pretty sussed. It was the best put-down I'd heard. So weeny. I reminded myself to use it in the future. Then I hit him in the face. It was more a slap with open knuckles than a punch. I never fought. I was never in the mood to hurt another person.

Except for tonight. I don't know why, but tonight was a perfect night and Lesley was looking good and I was in the mood to stoop to Lawrence's level.

His friends stood around while I beat his face and knocked him down. He got up and I grabbed him by the hair. I dragged him to the metal struts that held up the awning, then I pushed his face against one of them and began to drag it downwards. The rusty strut cut into his cheek and blood coursed down his face. Lesley was screaming but I'd just gone mad.

Brian came out with the beers and Lawrence was slumped on the ground. He had blood pouring out of his mouth. He looked up at me through slitted eyes and said, "You've broken my fucking teeth, you bastard." Shit.

Everyone said Lawrence was a twat and he deserved it and good job. But it wasn't a good job because he was in hospital on a drip. And his jaw was broken.

And then, one week later, came two letters in one envelope sent from my parents. The first was on college notepaper and said: "Dear Mr and Mrs Cope, Your son ... blah, blah, blah ... fighting and breaking students' jaws, etc., etc." It finished by saying if I was found on the college grounds at all, the police would be called. The second letter was from my parents, who sounded shattered. I did feel bad for them, but I'd had no intention of staying in college and this would probably get me up off my ass.

MAY 5th 1977: A MEETING OF THE MINDS

On Saturday May 5th, I was woken at about 10.30 a.m. by Candy James bearing white toast spread thick with butter and marmalade, and a mug of milky tea with two sugars. It was part of an arrangement we'd come to. She would get up and go for breakfast in the college canteen, then, before her first lecture, she'd bring some toast back and make the tea in our room. It was a routine many months old and I'd been able to continue it indefinitely because of my enforced low profile on account of the Banning Order.

I'd been at Eric's all Friday night. We'd got a taxi about 2 a.m. and he'd taken us as far as we could afford. Hilary was away in Leeds, so we'd been dropped off at the Old Swan. Smelly Elly and I had walked the remaining seven miles, freezing but happy. One time, I'd got the driver to drop me off near an alley, then I ran off without paying. But Liverpool taxi drivers were too sussed to risk it often. I'd heard about one guy getting run down by the cab-driver he did it to.

I lay on my stomach in bed and felt around on the floor for the toast. I took a bite and put my head back on the pillow. Then I sunk back to sleep with my hand in the marmalade. About 12.30, I woke again. No-one was there, and no music played, like it usually did down the corridor. I turned over on to my back and licked the toast off my right hand. I then remembered that the Clash were playing that evening, and I walked into the shower room and hosed myself down.

I stayed in the shower about 45 minutes and gradually came around. I'd plugged the hole and the water was now midway round my ankles. I sunk down into the shower. The heat and the pressure of the water cascading over my head forced me to breathe through my mouth. I stretched up from my still-crouching position and switched off the water. I hadn't brought any soap with me, but I felt gooood.

Around 3 o'clock, Smelly Elly walked into the room. I'd sat for nearly two hours wondering what to wear. As soon as someone arrived, I'd always be galvanised into action. And, suddenly, we had to be in Mathew Street.

I stuck on a faded yellow Big Youth T-shirt that rode up at the back, my faded sneakers and these really tight black-cotton drainpipes that were coated with weird oily rubber. The stuff came off every time I sat down, but they were so cool. It was hot so I just took my shittiest jacket and a pair of shades that, I thought, made me look like Patti Smith on the inside sleeve of *Radio Ethiopia*.

We jumped on a no. 10 bus for Liverpool. I carried nothing but the jacket. The cloakrooms in Eric's were crap. People just used them to have sex in. And when the main group was on, the crush in front of the stage was like the seventh wave going over you.

Of course, Smelly Elly was dressed as usual. He never paid heed to where he was. He'd dress the same whether it was a dinner party or a week's holiday. He wore a long mac and a V-neck sweater, and he held a carrier bag full of shit that would fall out if he put the bag down. Every week it was the same - he'd get up to dance and next to his feet, on the dance floor, would be a carrier bag full of shit.

Mathew Street was awash with brand-new punk-rockers. People we'd never seen before. Weekend punks, greasers, bikers, Teds, even hippies with make-up and Union Jacks painted on their faces.

It was the first real event. It felt like the public had heard too. But that was okay, because it was for the Clash and they didn't really suit the underground. Somehow it was even better if young kids got into the Clash because they had this heavy moral side to them. They were like Cromwell's New Model Army marching into battle. I loved the Clash when Strummer was angry, but when they occasionally became good time, I'd automatically bleep it out of my mind.

We walked around for a while then left the area. There were just too many people. We hung out in a pub up by the Anglican cathedral and waited for the crowd to disappear. Eric's had a "No under-20" policy, which was great. It was okay for us, though, as you didn't need ID.

About 9 o'clock, we made the mile trek back to Eric's. We waited on the line about five minutes, showed our tickets and strode down into the lights and the bass-boom of Eric's. At the bottom of the stairs, Peter Burns and

Paul Rutherford were ensconced on their thrones, the territory of floor just before the main doors. They would sit there, sometimes with Lyn and their young acolytes, and slag people off as they entered the club.

"Ay, Julian, Hilary's been looking for yer," said Peter, then to a girl behind me, who was wearing a leopard-skin pill-box hat, "Ay, gairl, worrav yer gorra dead cat on yer 'ed for?"

Smelly Elly and I fought our way up to the bar. Hilary had been home to Leeds. The 'White Riot' tour was there the night before Liverpool. I heard her sweet Leodian strains: "Julian, I thought I'd never find you. I only got back just in time. They were brilliant last night, it was fucking brill. Oh, yeah, this is Kath, me mate I've told you about. And this is Sue, she's come up from London."

I smiled. Sue was really cute, black hair and a great figure. She had tits like Siouxsie Sioux and a washed out white T-shirt. Kath had just split up with her long-time boyfriend and was at her first punk gig.

"The Slits are fucking brilliant, too," Hilary continued. "I don't like Subway Sect, though, it's just dead monotonous."

I was trusting Hilary's musical judgement less and less as time went on. It seemed too early to be splitting into musical factions. But it was happening naturally.

In the other room, the main room, the sound system had shut off. There was a sound of cables being plugged into loud amplifiers. I ducked out of the conversation and made my way through the crowd to the front of the stage.

In plain black shirts and casual black pants, the four members of Subway Sect ambled, sheepishly, onto the stage. The drummer had a tiny kit with one floor tom-tom. The guitarist had a Fender Jaguar and a plain yellow armband. The bass player was totally anonymous and the singer stood with his back to the audience eating a sandwich.

Drums and bass started together, a slow-midtempo beat: Boom-bum –bum bum, Boom-bum-bum-bum, Boom-bum-bum-bum ...

Then a single tiny guitar note: Bow, bow, bow, bow, bow...

For at least a minute, the riff held steady, then the lead singer carelessly turned half round, the mike in his left hand. With his right hand in the air, he crushed the remains of the sandwich into the ceiling and began to intone into the mike. It was almost puritanical. I had no idea what he was singing about, but it felt as though he'd been into the future and was telling us about it. There was no chorus. Just the same riff throughout. I guessed the chorus must be the bit where everyone sung the same word over and over. The song finished and there was polite applause.

The next song was the same. A kind of three-note Stooges thing. But still at 15 mph. This time the guitarist played a chord for most of the song, but when the singer muttered, "Solo" into the mike, the guitarist returned to the steady Bow-bow-bow of the first song. The songs all had names like 'Eastern Europe', 'Parallel Lines', 'Don't Split It' or equally cryptic titles.

I watched, spellbound, as they played. They were the first group I'd seen where the musicians were motionless. But each one was wrapped up in the concentration of his fragile two-note part. They never fell to pieces. They always started and stopped together. But you knew that if, for one moment, one of them lost concentration, then they'd be horribly lost.

After about half an hour, they walked off, heads bowed, to more polite applause. Wow, my head spun. These guys were my new heroes. I rushed back to the other room to discuss how brilliant they were with someone.

"Oh, I thought they were crap, Julian. They've no songs," said Hilary.

"Oh, uhm, I er, erm, I thought they were, uhm, er, quite brilliant, actually." Smelly Elly was beaming. It was his ideal music, I could tell that. He'd been doing his minimalist thing in some obscure part of the club.

A bunch of guys I'd seen loads were going crazy about Subway Sect. Actually, most of them were standing looking at just this one guy, who was going crazy on his own. This guy was a bit of a loudmouth. I'd noticed him in Probe before. But his face was so animated, I stood and gazed at him. He wore a black leather jacket and black combat pants. He had a Clash T-shirt under the jacket, which was zipped halfway. His hair was a natural black and gelled into a boyish quiff. In fact, everything about him was

boyish. He was the most enthusiastic person I had ever seen. Beautiful. On his leather was a home-made badge. It said: "Rebel Without a Degree".

In the main room, a guitar cranked out an ugly funk chord. The Slits were on stage. I rushed in to see a row of beer guts leering over the crash barrier at the front. The four girls on stage looked like four skinny sheaves of straw tied with rags. "Show us your minge," called a beer hound to Ari, the singer. She goose-stepped around and booted him in the throat. It even got applause from his mates.

The Slits was pounding, scratchy and tom-tom heavy. The vocals were like harpies calling to each other. The drums always followed the riff. They had song titles like 'So Tough', and 'Typical Girls' and Ari-Up, the singer, introduced the songs in voices alternating between white-reggae girl and Nico speaking Wagner.

I really liked The Slits. I didn't love them, though. They were too alien to me and too hard. I couldn't appreciate them, they weren't sexy or confrontational. They were weird chicks that just existed. I walked back to the bar and sat down in an alcove.

It was an event. This was definitely an event. I'd been excited to see the Clash. I knew it would be a big deal, but it was just hitting me. I was getting off more on other people's anticipation, and there was a hell of a lot in the club at that moment.

What if the Clash were crap? All the people here would freak. Everyone held them in such high regard, the pressure was terrible. I worried and worried, then I thought, Shit, what am I worrying for? I just couldn't imagine what *they* thought. This scene was supposed to be the great leveller, but I felt just the same about these groups as I felt about Can or John Cale.

Groups like Subway Sect were even stranger. They'd stand next to you in the toilet and you'd look at them. You'd think, Do these guys know what they are doing? Like weird cults, they trailed into Eric's, did their diffident thing and left.

I thought deeply about all this stuff, while the Eric's party raged. I could see Pete Burns' lot lying all over the stairs. Hilary was at the bar talking to

her friends Sue and Kath and Lyn Burns. And the Rebel and his cronies were heading into the main room. It was time for the Clash.

There was no intro, no music or anything. The Clash walked on and just went, "Fuuuck Offff!" It was so funny, I started laughing at them. They were totally brilliant. It was just as cartoony as the Ramones, but blazing with colour. And they all moved in rigid formation. Joe Strummer was a maniac, on his knees and bawling his head off at the front row. As he got lower, the guys at the front also went down with him and from behind you could see everything. It was this weird tableau, one guy performing to about four guys, all of them crouching as low as they could get.

I noticed something particular about the audience. You could get lost in it. You could let yourself get carried anywhere you wished. The crowd was like a field of corn, swaying and dipping. It felt so good, I sunk deeper into the centre. And the Clash whirlwind blew across us and took our heads off.

This group was like one of those old Eastern-European wind-up train sets. You turn the key, put the engine on the track, the engine scurries down and picks up a truck, then the two of them zoom into a depot and pick up their load, which is just some lithographed cylinder. Meanwhile there's a little factory mill in the corner that also started the minute you switched on. The doors open and inside is a click-click-click-click. You peer in and there is a two-dimensional tin-man sawing the same piece of tin wood endlessly. In a far corner a signal gantry stutters its stop, go, stop, go. And all this from one wind-up.

That was the Clash. Strummer was the engine and Mick Jones was the truck, both zooming round doing their own thing but each picking up the crowd, zipping it round and then dropping it back down. In his corner, Simonon endlessly sawed the same piece of wood.

In the very heart of the crowd, I was a madman. I bounced up and down, up and down. The pogo thing was a bit of an urban legend. People danced that way because there was no room. It was only after people heard the word "pogo" that the craze started. I tended to do whatever the group on stage suggested. During Subway Sect, I stood still and watched. The Slits made you move, like a skank, but more graceless than reggae. The Clash, however, suggested unlimited nuclear war. You needed a dance that

described fire-fights in the Mekong Delta or the napalming of homeless children.

I didn't overthink my thing, I just did it, spinning wildly and, in the confines of the crowd, using up far too much space. I was in the mood to be the guy who pisses everybody off, you know, the dickhead who starts the crowd rocking from side to side. Most members of an audience don't think they, individually, have any power. It's not true, though. You do what you want.

I bounced ass off for about 40 minutes, but I kept reeling backwards into the same guy. I didn't look around, but I'd feel his toes under my feet. Finally he began to push me. Oh, I thought, he's alive after all. I spun around and with my back to the Clash I bounced up and down on the spot and stared him out.

It was the Rebel Without a Degree. We fixed each other with a blank face. My blank face was better, though, because the up-and-down movement forced my tongue out, visibly reducing my IQ. The confrontation was passing. I mean, I liked this guy I'd never talked to. I could feel my expression getting more reasonable every minute, so I spun back around to face the Clash.

I'd managed to create a minor space around me by putting my hands on my hips. This turned my elbows into lethal weapons and everyone kept out of my way. There was a sudden surge in the crowd and we all went flying to the left. As the crowd righted itself, I elbowed my way back to my spot, but there was an obstruction to my right and I had to twat the person next to me. I heard a girl scream. It was Hilary's friend Kath. I didn't know her at all. We'd smiled at each other, but suddenly I was whacking her in the face. I felt bad, so I hauled her out of the crowd and into the other room.

"Are you crazy? They're all maniacs in there. Stay in here and watch or you'll get killed," and I was off, piling back into the rugby scrum at the centre.

The Clash were epic. They were totally fucking epic. My favourite music was always the weirder shit, but this was so upfront and such hard showbiz

that I fell for it pretty much all the way. They did loads of encores, made loads of effort, then they were gone.

The club burned on free energy for the rest of the night. All the right-on guys loved Strummer. All the women wanted to fuck Simonon. All the secret rock stars wanted to be Mick Jones. It was just garble, garble, for the rest of the night.

I saw a girl I knew called Jane. She was a bit of a punkette and she'd cut my hair about a month before. We nattered our heads off near the bar and she said she saw her boyfriend coming over. It was my friend the Rebel.

"Hiya, Pete, this is Julian. He's at college in Prescot."

So we were finally meeting. His name was Pete Wylie. And he talked and he talked and he talked. He was great. I knew that, instantly. Energy surged out of him. It was the first time I'd ever met someone and known immediately that they were fated to get somewhere.

Wylie's mates trooped over to where we were standing. They were an unprepossessing bunch. There was a straight-looking guy with glasses called Jim. Another guy with very long hair whose name I didn't catch. And behind them stood two other guys. These two were just kids. One of them was called Dave Pickett. He had a friendly face, like one of the baddies in *Thunderbirds* - remember how they had concerned frowns moulded into their foreheads? He was a mixture of embarrassment at everything and "Fuck off, you're all crap". I liked him immediately.

The last kid of the group was a total dork. He looked like Joey Ramone - thick glasses and long shapeless hair and huge purple Jagger lips. He was a bit nondescript in places, but he had great detail. Like his white ankle-socks and his baggy black pants were studiously at half-mast. His sleeves were a little too short, but just enough for him to have made it a conscious thing. If I'd met him cold, I'd have dismissed him as a non-head, but he was Wylie's mate and he did cut it in a weird kind of way.

"This is Duke," said Wylie. "He wants to be Dave Bowie." The idea of this guy ever being "Dave" Bowie was so off its head that I didn't even laugh. And Duke didn't retaliate. He didn't seem to need to answer.

We stood around in a circle and ranted. Pete Wylie was solar-powered, no on-off switch, he started and then he just went. But he did listen too. The others watched as Wylie and I talked.

Then Duke spoke. His one sentence in half an hour. Wylie listened intently, agreed, and carried on ranting. Duke, or the Duke, as people seemed to refer to him, had the lowest, strongest Liverpool accent I'd heard. He didn't speak in sentences. Just interjections.

Wylie would talk about places they all hated. Duke would agree by simply saying "Scummy" under his breath.

Wylie would talk about groups they all hated. Duke would dismiss them abruptly: "Bunch o' no-marks."

Wylie would get on his Clash-as-gods rap. Duke dismissed his entire argument with a simple "No way."

It was a classic comedy act and they'd developed it without noticing. As an outsider, I thought it was brilliant.

That night, we talked and exchanged addresses. I wrote down Duke's address under "D", Duke McCool. Of course, his name wasn't McCool. I found out later that I'd just misheard McCull. But I thought of him as Duke McCool for quite a while after that.

They all lived with their parents. Wylie was at Liverpool University but never went, Duke was doing his "A" levels and Dave Pickett was in the lower sixth form.

"D'you want to form a group?" Wylie asked me, out of the blue. He didn't know if I even played anything.

"Sure."

"Duke's the singer. He's got a great voice. Ay, Duke, be Iggy." There was no answer. There was no need.

"Okay, I'll play bass," I said. My bass was back in Tamworth and I was completely shit, but I didn't know if these guys were serious or winding me up.

By the end of the evening, we were a group. It was all Wylie's trip. He suggested Arthur Hostile & the Crucial Three. Duke said, "Sod the bloody Arthur Hostile bit off, it's crap." So we were The Crucial Three. Wylie went on about how legendary we would be, and Duke and I went along with him, as part of the in-joke.

It was 2 a.m. The place was closing. Everyone had left but us and we were about to be kicked out. I hadn't even noticed. I was just transfixed by my new pals. Hilary came up and I casually introduced her before she dragged me off into the night.

We walked up the stairs of Eric's and I was dizzy from the evening. The cold air hit us hard, but we had a lift home as Sue had a car. Hilary got in the front passenger seat, next to Sue, and I got in the back with Hilary's friend Kath.

We followed the one-way system through Whitechapel, then round past the Royal Court Theatre, round back routes and onto Prescot Road. I sat in the back seat, head against the window, and tripped out on the night's events as the car sped towards Prescot.

CHERRIES

All down Prescot Road, I watched Sue's reflection in the rear-view mirror. From my back-seat position, I saw the streetlights catch her face every hundred or so yards. I was drawn to pale bratty-looking girls and black hair. But she and Hilary were involved in heavy conversation.

I started to make conversation with Kath. Hilary had kept me informed of a running saga between Kath and her boyfriend, Daryl, in Leeds. She was always running away from him, then going back, then running again. He'd make her dress normally for a while, then she'd freak out and dress crazy in front of guys he wanted to impress. They'd started to sound like a real pair of planks. He'd just voted National Front to piss her off and she was trying to break away.

With all this information from Hilary, I wasn't too interested in talking to Kath, but I was a nice kid, so I did anyway.

Kathryn Cherry was nothing like I'd imagined. She was sweet and bright and hung up about her boyfriend. She knew it was all over, but it had gone on so long, she felt bad about the wasted time. I understood. I felt empty without Jane. But this new scene was filling all my time and making it much easier. We spilled our troubles to each other in the back of the car and were still talking as we pulled into college.

It was about 3.30 a.m. and everywhere glistened with dew. Kath invited us back to her room. She was in the same hall as Hilary and the four of us made our way down the corridor.

Outside Kath's door, Hilary was suddenly exhausted and said she was going to bed. Sue was staying in Hilary's room, so she left too. I felt intrusive and made my excuses to leave. But Kath was so down to earth, I couldn't. I didn't want to, anyway, we were having a good time and I was speeding off the adrenalin of the night.

The room was like Hilary's, really cosy and well-stocked. We put Kath's nightlight almost under the bed, so we were just shapes, and she made tea and granary toast with Lurpak butter. I ate about eight pieces as well as her Camembert. We had more tea and I finished a packet of digestives and a

Kit-Kat. I never ate for hours, or days if I could avoid it. Money was far too precious to spend on the stomach. So every time I'd hit some free seam of food, I made sure it all went.

It was about 5.30 in the morning. The dawn chorus had started doing their thing and Kath said she wanted to change. She stood up and turned her back to me. She was wearing black riding-jodhpurs and an old tiny lace top. I hadn't noticed at first, but as the hours passed she was becoming incredibly sexy. She pushed the jodhpurs down over her ass with both hands and rolled over on the bed. The jodhpurs were scrunched up around her feet and they were getting her nowhere. I grabbed them, one leg at a time, and pulled them off.

She was gorgeous. Her hair was long and auburn and it had been plaited, very efficiently, around her head. Now it was late and her hair fell all over her face. She had on these tiny panties and her legs were very long. She bent down to pick the tray of food up and the lace top rode up over her ass. She wore no bra and looked so unrestrained.

Some women just change personality without clothes. Women who hold themselves together in their finery can burst a man out of his pants as soon as they stop trying. I love that about women.

As the sun was coming up, we lay semi-clothed, each one thinking of a reason to touch the other. Finally, I said, "You have a beautiful belly," and ran the tips of my hand across her stomach to the top of her panties. She lay on her back and I was crushed between her and the wall. I was wearing just my black pants and more rubber was coming off onto her quilt. She sat up and said, "Take them off," then she pulled her lace top over her head and threw it across the room. She got up and we prodded and pulled till my pants came off.

We lay in bed touching each other all over and she felt so good. Her skin was very fair, almost white. I started to lick her all the way down her body, but when my tongue reached into her pubes, I wanted to stay in that one place for a very long while. I lay there and just lapped her up. I lapped and lapped and didn't get bored.

After about an hour, she manoeuvred me over to her long mirror and in the semi-darkness of 7 a.m. I watched her give me head in the reflection...

ONE DAY AND A HALF OF THE CRUCIAL THREE

Peter James Wylie, 19, stood at the gate of his Walton garden waiting for me to arrive. I'd given myself two hours for the journey as Liverpool had no sense of shape to me. If I knew a route, then I would use it at all costs. It took me a while to realise that the different areas were all joined together.

Walton is lots of 1950s suburban council estates. Nice roads with neat gardens and pleasant semi-detached houses. Roads spilled all over and nothing ran parallel with anything else. When I finally saw Wylie, I knew I'd been close by for at least an hour.

My bass guitar was back in Tamworth, so I'd borrowed a black Les Paul copy with four clumpy strings. We came through the side door and Pete's mother said hello. I liked mothers and was always as nice as they could stand. It was still strange away from home. I mean, it was great and all, but you soon forget how to act around adults. I tried to act the way I'd want my friends to behave in front of my parents.

In the living room was an amplifier with Wylie's guitar plugged in. The three-piece suite was arranged in a circle and Duke McCool was sitting reading. This was not at all unusual to me. But within weeks, I'd realise the enormous one-off quality of the Duke's presence here. In fact, in all the years I knew him, this would be the one and only time that he was earlier than me.

Duke McCool, AKA McCull, AKA Ian McCulloch, looked up at me, unconcerned, and said, "Awright?" He had thick, thick glasses on the end of his nose, as though he never wore them normally. I'd never seen him with glasses on before, but then, neither had they seen me in mine. I would rather screw my eyes up and squint like mad than be seen in public with glasses on.

Duke self-consciously took his glasses off. I thought he was preparing to say something, but no words came, and anyway, Wylie had started.

"So can you play? I mean, you don't have to be any good. Me mate Spenner is coming round to drum later. We'll set up all those boxes for

him." He pointed to the corner of the room.

Yes, I could play. But everyone was nervous of doing his thing in front of the others.

"Sing 'Salomine Shuffle', Duke," said Wylie and launched into a kind of 'I'm not your Stepping Stone' riff. The amp was clanky and distorted. I thought it sounded great, but Duke sat there and said nothing.

Wylie carried on riffing away, walking around, smiling, doing his Joe Strummer stance. He strode over to me, all leather jacket and guitar, and stopped a foot away. We stared, smiling, into each other's eyes and I figured he was paying me back for dancing on his feet during the Clash gig.

Pete's mother brought the tea and biscuits in and we all lounged around, talking about music. Immediately, I felt tuned into them. It wasn't only what they liked; we disagreed on shitloads. No, what appealed to me was their unreasonable attitude. We soon realised that we had the Velvet Underground in common. But Duke loved Bowie and I thought he was shit. Wylie and I loved The Doors. "No way," said Duke. "Morrison? What a pretentious turd." Duke loved The Stooges. He'd kill for Iggy. I'd only heard *Raw Power* and thought it was bad glam. But I'd read Nick Kent articles and Iggy Pop sounded brilliant.

We ranted on. I got The Dolls thrown at me, so I threw Television back. Then Patti Smith - and the New York scene was God. Sometimes we completely agreed with each other, other times it was more like a tournament. If I had never heard something that Duke considered important, he'd squint at me with his mouth open. He couldn't comprehend that I didn't know it. He seemed to be thinking, You poor sod.

I felt quite the opposite. I always felt jealous. Shit, I'd think, they've never heard this. And I'd watch the awe in their faces as the song unfolded before them, and I'd long for that feeling, and I'd be desperate for new music to blow my head clean off.

And so The Crucial Three rehearsal whizzed along. Every so often someone would pick up a guitar. Then we'd each describe the kind of thing we wanted, as not one of us could get close with an instrument. No-one

wanted a punk group. And no-one was in a hurry. Well, we *were* in a hurry, really, quite a big hurry. But not so much that we had to form any old group.

See, the punk thing had this kind of built-in obsolescence. When I first got into the idea, in November 1976, I thought I was way too late. But new people were finding the scene all the time. Now we figured punk would be over in a couple of months. We wanted something new.

I told Wylie and Duke about Pere Ubu. Wylie was far and away the most open-minded guy I'd met. I told him about Can and Faust, and started in on my Ambassador of Kraut rant. We both got loud and crazy, and were dancing around the room, and I was shouting about seeing Faust in 1973: "... and they had two pinball machines, right, one on each side of the stage, and a block of concrete in front of the drums, and they ... Oh wow, yeah, the pinball machines were put through a synthesizer. And one guy with an acoustic, and all these kind of arc lights or something. And they came on and just started with, have you heard 'It's a Rainy Day' off *Faust So Far*? Oh, it's just completely brilliant ... wow ... I've got to play you it, it's like just drums to start, Bom, Bom, Bom, Bom, Bom, Bom, and mad piano comes in, Jang, Jang, Jang, Jang, just building up and building up, and then the vocals come in, right, over the Jang, Jang, Jang, like," I was singing now, "It's a rainy day, Bom-Bom, Born-bom, Bom-Bom ... Sunshine girl, Bom-Bom, Bom-Bom, Bom-Born ... It's a rainy day, Bom-Bom, Bom-Bom, Bom-Bom ... Sunshine baby ... on and on and on...

Outside, there was a face at the window. Spenner and I didn't shake hands, we just kind of acknowledged each other with smiles and grunts. It was a weird age to be meeting people. I was 19, Wylie and Duke were 18, and Spenner, at 17, was still at school. It didn't seem like we should start shaking hands for years. Spenner, AKA Steve Spence, turned out to be a friend and acolyte of Pete Wylie. There were many of them around. He was this friendly half-caste schoolkid who dug the hanging out. His arrival prompted us to play music.

We set up the boxes between the chair and the sofa, and Wylie said I could plug the bass into his amp. I had no leads and the only spare he had was about 18" long, so I had to sit on the amp and play sitting astride it.

Wylie showed me the riff to 'Salomine Shuffle'. "See, it's like ... A, C, D, F, round and round. Sing 'Salomine', Duke."

The Duke remained slobbed out on the couch and Spenner and I lurched into this cyclical riff. Wylie joined in and drowned out my bass immediately. Duke seemed no closer to actually singing so Wylie started up:

> "When I get zits, I use calamine
>
> And when I need to dance, I do the Salomine."

It sounded terrible, but I didn't know them well enough, so we ground along until it just petered out.

But the Duke was suffering from a typical Liverpool malaise. "I don't wanna do sod all, if it's gonna sound crap," he muttered under his breath. I was liking the Duke more every minute. We were total opposites. He refused to commit himself at any time - I just jumped in and thrashed about.

"Well, sing 'I'm Bloody Sure You're on Dope', then," hassled the ever insistent Wylie.

"There's no bloody song," Duke looked down. "It's just a title, Pete. When 'ave I sung it, ay? When?"

I didn't want it to end in a fight. We talked some more, but the atmosphere got a bit weird and I said I had to go.

On the bus back to Prescot, I had to rethink. In the club, Pete Wylie was impressive and authoritative. He had all these girls and kids around him. I'd mistaken Duke for an acolyte at first, but Wylie deferred to him constantly. They were balanced in a weird way and I was baffled. The group thing didn't bother me. I'd had too much fun to be pissed off by that. It was the psychology that I was fascinated by - Wylie was outwardly very impressive, but hung up on the Duke's opinion. Duke was outwardly a dork, but didn't seem to give a shit. He seemed quite at home in his own

space. I decided I liked them both a lot and hoped something would happen.

STITCHES

The early May weather was fantastic. This day, Smelly Elly had come into college very early, finished his morning lectures and had one hour and a half free, in which time we had decided to visit the Oxfam thrift shop in Prescot.

Candy James was away at her parents', which always caused me tremendous problems, as the room also became Smelly Elly's the moment she left. Many people at college believed that his flat was an urban legend - Smelly Elly was never off the campus. He slept anywhere. Wherever he left his bag of shit, that was home.

As I had done none of the coursework, I had a tendency to forget that other people could be busy. So now he was waiting for me and my lateness was eating into his free time.

I rushed in. "Hi, Paul, Keith's lent me his Dolls' albums." I cradled them in my arms, along with a large hairdryer and some shampoo. I'd borrowed these from Terry on the first floor and had to return them as soon as I was finished.

I put the first Dolls' album on and ran the hot water in Candy's sink. Then I stripped off my T-shirt and stuck my head in the basin. 'Personality Crisis' blared out over the whoosh of the water in my ears. Smelly Elly's muffled voice stuttered away in the background. "Uh?" I yelled and switched off the tap.

"Uh, uhm, I was wondering how long you'd be?"

"Er, I dunno, about five minutes. Why?"

"Uhm, we were going into, er, Prescot today."

Shit, I'd forgotten- and he'd been waiting ages. I bombed around the room and got my T-shirt and sneakers on, then I found Candy's keys and put them, with my money, into my jeans pocket.

"When I say I'm in lurve, you best believe I'm in love, L.U.V.," David Johansen barked, and The New York Dolls grunted into 'Lookin' for a

Kiss.'

I took the hairdryer, plugged it in and furiously began to dry my hair. It took me about a minute, then I smeared gel all over and shouted, "Ready."

We waited at the lift. We waited and we waited, then we got pissed off. We'd hear the lift two floors below, grinding away, but it wasn't making it to the eighth floor today.

"Stairs," I shouted, and started to run down the corridor. Smelly Elly followed and we ran, almost in unison, to the fire exit.

No-one used the stairs at all. The stairwell was square and from the eighth floor, looking straight down, it was the same effect as that famous Beatles photograph where they're all leaning on the rail and looking over.

Over the months, I'd had the stairs pretty much to myself and I'd devised a way of kind of holding the rail as far ahead as I could reach, then vaulting down a full flight of stairs, cornering wildly, and repeating the same operation, only facing the other way.

The trick was to use as few steps as possible on the corners. The momentum of the jump was meant to propel you into each turn. Sometimes, you could work up a rhythm that would almost beat the lift, but generally I just used this route for returning the various stuff I was constantly borrowing.

Today, I had rhythm. I'd bounce and dance my way down every flight, I'd let out the vocal equivalent of a loud guitar crash-chord. Brang ... Then I'd inhale, during the cornering and the jump, and repeat the whole thing again. Brang ... Higher and higher I jumped, down I crashed, skidding and cornering like a bastard. The stairwell was flooded with brilliant sunshine. It was all glass and concrete, and the college playing fields dipped and lurched with me as I flew along. Above me, I could hear the Ellerbeck steps growing softer and I thought how good life can be...

Bam ... I blacked out.

"Aaaaaargh, aaaaaargh. Sheeeeee-it! Fuck, fuck, fuck."

I was lying on the floor of the stairwell, after smashing my head open on a jagged part of the ceiling. Smelly Elly and a girl called Ginny were looking over me.

"Aaaaaargh, uhn, uhn, uhn."

My right hand had automatically reached up in an effort to halt the terrible, terrible pain. I had to moan. I had to let out long "Aaaaaarghs" just to channel the energy somewhere.

As I lay there, I was aware of people all around me. I must have been on one of the women's floors, and girls were crying and freaking out, except for Ginny, who was being nurse.

A girl I didn't know came rushing through the fire-door with a huge wad of stretchy bandage. Ginny grabbed it from her and started to fix me up. She took one end of the bandage and held it by my ear. Then she took Smelly Elly's hand and pressed it against both the bandage and ear. Slowly, she wound the material around, until it reached my bump. She eased my hand away, gently. Blood pumped out of my head and coursed down into my eyes.

"Shit, we'd better call an ambulance," she screamed, and all the other girls used this as an excuse to have hysterics and run around crazily.

Whiston Hospital is only about one and a half miles from college. It's a typical bunch of buildings, put up at various times, but I'd already heard of it. Scousers called it "Wizzy Ozzy". Anytime you want to create Liverpool slang, take the required word, knock off most of the ending and add "y" or "ie". For "football", Scousers say "footy". For "suspenders", they say "suzzies". *Coronation Street* was reduced to just "Corrie".

Anyway, the ambulance dropped us in front of Outpatients and zoomed off. We made our way through the glass doors and into reception.

"You'll have to register," said a curt-looking woman.

"Uhm, er, it's my friend, he, er, he's in rather a bad way."

"Yeah, well, 'e'll still have to register."

"I'll register for you," he said, stammerless and with some authority. "Er, could you get someone to take care of him? He's in great pain. I think he might be in shock."

Maybe it was the white coat. Maybe it's the role that people take on naturally when they are concerned. Whatever, Smelly Elly was galvanised into action.

A hospital orderly, pushing a wheelchair, was commandeered and we set off down a maze of corridors. Finally, we burst through double fire-doors into an enormous room. My head was bursting and my mind was playing tricks. I could feel my pulse battering away in my head. I kept thinking I was losing gallons of blood.

A young Indian trainee whisked me in for an X-ray, then she checked the wound. It started about two inches above my right eye and continued backwards and upwards.

"Is it bad, doctor?"

By now, Dr Ellerbeck was examining the wound. The Indian doctor was unforthcoming, so he described it to me. "Hmm. It's bad, alright. It's, er, about 4" long and it's ... it's quite deep. In fact," he stopped. "Well, it gets, er, deeper in the centre ... I can see your skull."

Alright, Paul, that was enough. I'd been getting into the idea of a wound. I always thought they gave you character, but this one seemed a bit over the top. The Indian trainee continued to clean and a doctor passed through the room on his way somewhere.

"Oh, doctor?" said the young intern.

"Yes? What is it?"

"This patient is requiring an awful lot of stitches."

He walked over and looked into my head. "How the hell did you do this? Fight?"

I started to tell him, in glorious detail, but he was in a roaring hurry. He called to the trainee, as he left, "You should be okay for the stitches. I'll

come and check on you in a while." And he was gone.

The young intern began her task. First she cut and shaved the area around the gash, then she threaded a needle. She was hunched over me like a mechanic. The pain was terrible as the needle pushed into my skin. I'd avoided stitches until now. Shit, what did little kids do? I grimaced and tried not to buck around, but finally I said, "I'm sorry, but this is killing. Is it gonna take long?"

"Oh, how stupid of me. I'm most terribly sorry. I'll spray some painkiller on it."

What? She's just gone ahead and forgotten the painkiller? My confidence in her was visibly reduced and Dr Ellerbeck took control of the situation. He stood above me, administering the numbing aerosol every few minutes. Everyone was taking him completely seriously, including me.

Thirty minutes later, the doctor reappeared. "How did it go?" he asked, approaching the scene.

"Oh, I'm nearly finished, doctor." The young intern had started hesitantly, but now seemed to be doing a fine job.

"Good God, woman, when did you last do stitches?" The doctor was very angry. "Look at this. You've only put in 13. And they're all spaced apart. You should have done at least 20."

They began to argue. The doctor ushered the young woman into an adjoining room. It was a very one-sided argument and we were quickly forgotten. No way was I sitting through that again. And Dr Ellerbeck was obviously thinking the same thing. I slid off the couch and into the wheelchair. Dr Ellerbeck grabbed my X-rays and pushed me and the chair out of the room.

Down the corridors we sped. We saw no-one. Then we rounded the bend into reception. We slowed right down to a nice NHS pace and casually passed through the rows of waiting patients. A kid with a knee bandage opened the double doors for us and we were out.

The wheelchair bounced and grated across the gravel, the attendant on the gate muttered his greeting and we passed through. We carried on, as doctor and patient, until we hit the Warrington Road. Then we stopped.

And I laughed my bloody head off.

HIP IS HIP, BUT HIPPEST IS THE TRIP

I was sitting with my brother Joss in the new alcove that Roger Eagle had built in Eric's. Where there had been three arches before, Roger had filled in the centre arch, creating a deep alcove with room for a table and seats for about eight.

Despite my paranoia, I was beginning to fit in. Peter Burns had looked so strange when I first met him that I'd felt pressure to look that weird. But he just did his glamour thing, got on with it and left everyone else to figure it out.

Roger Eagle, conversely, was a 40-year-old own-nothing "I sleep with my records" type. And yet, except for the petty bitching and the hang ups, each night at Eric's was like a homecoming - and here I was with 13 stitches in my half-shaven head.

Joss was up from Tamworth for a weekend of wildness. I'd promised him this trip for a while. He was 15, just, and I was causing a rift between him and my parents. I'd not intended this at all, but things were so good up here that I was desperate to share it with him. As the older brother, I'd always felt it my duty to look after him. We were very close and I didn't want my absence to affect him more than was necessary. Also, as the manic cuckoo had finally fled the roost, Joss had begun to feel the subtle downward pressure of parents, who were determined to "get it right" with this one.

I had collected Joss from Lime Street station around 3.30 in the afternoon and we'd hung around Mathew Street and Pete and Lyn's shop in Casey Street. It was fun for me, just showing him where we walked every day, flipping through the vast and seemingly impenetrable record sleeves in Probe.

I loved to give him bits of clothing that I'd picked out over the weeks in honour of his arrival. He would wear them with pride in Liverpool, then sneak them home and keep them hidden. My mother had an almost fanatical ability to turn our everyday clothes into dusters.

"I'm sorry, darling. I thought you'd finished with that old thing."

So now we were in Eric's and it was empty. See, the only way around the "No under-20" thing was to arrive before Roger Eagle, then lurk in the shadows until the place filled up. That meant getting in around 8 o'clock, around three hours before things started to happen. Doreen was on the door and she let us in free. She knew that getting in free was the difference between going three nights a week or going once.

As we sat in the alcove, I was getting off on being with Joss. There is something so thrilling about introducing someone to your thing. Watching their eyes and trying not to spoil it for them by saying, "Get ready, there's a good bit coming."

Joss was listening to the Buzzcocks all the time. Also the Clash and the Ramones. Fifteen and sixteen year olds loved that music. My brother had immediately formed Tamworth's first punk group. They were a two-piece called The Flids - local slang for kids with the thalidomide syndrome. Joss played bass and sang. Another kid, called B. Smith, played drums and sang. They sat at home and wrote chilling hung-up middle-England psycho-dramas. It's true. They hadn't realised it, but that didn't make it any less true. There were fully detailed descriptions of teacher / pupil love. There were endless pronouncements about girls at their school. One girl that they hated, called Tracey Stanisford, was anagrammed to Dirt-Sore-Cat's Fanny. It was all very detailed and it was set over this weak, weak Stooges sound. Joss played bass like Ron Asheton. He had to, as there was no other instrument to support him. While The Crucial Three were bullshitting each other, The Flids were back in Tamworth, churning out an album's worth of material every week.

The hours passed. Paul Ellerbeck had joined us in the alcove. Tonight the Spitfire Boys, the sole Liverpool punk group, were playing. They were weak and characterless, but they were doing something. Paul Rutherford, a 16-year-old cross between Patti Smith and Marc Bolan, was the singer. He was very pretty and danced his ass off every Eric's night. Pete Clarke, a guy from St. Helens, was the drummer. Paul had started to call him "Budgie" as a put-down and the name had stuck. The guitarist was a no-mark, who people slagged all the time, and lastly, my favourite, was Paul Anthony Griffiths.

Griff, the bass player, was a heavy gay and hysterically funny. In Tamworth, you were queer, not gay. Quickly, I adapted to cosmopolitan Liverpool. From now on, I'd remember, queers want to be called "gay". Except Griff, of course. He called himself a "queer". "Read William Burroughs, Julian. There's nothing normal about us 'queers'." Again and again, the weirder angle would be thrown at me. Each time, I'd take it in, decide for a while and file it away. To compound his theory, that his "queerness" was okay, Griff wore a home-made T-shirt with the inscription "Sodomy and Gonorrhoea - A Bible Story". He was about three years older than us, and three years was everything, at that age.

Tonight, Pete Wylie surpassed himself. My brother, on being introduced to him, asked why he had the name "Cliff God" chalked like a logo on the back of his leather jacket. He told Joss that he didn't have time to paint the name on, as the scene was moving so fast he might be someone else by tomorrow.

That was the first night in the alcove. And that was where I would stay, from now on. My eyes were so bad that I couldn't risk walking around. Besides, that way, they came to you.

Dave Pickett, Joss, Smelly Elly, the Duke and I sat around. I showed them my wound. It worked well, in context with my clothes, and I felt quite well coordinated.

Griff was hanging out with us, when Hilary rushed up. "Julian, Eagle's kicked your brother out."

Joss had left the alcove to make the 10-yard journey to the women's toilet and been seized by Roger Eagle and lobbed out of the club. I went up to see him, waiting in Mathew Street.

Joss was okay. Griff and Paul Rutherford let him in through the load-in bay and hid him in the dressing room. He stayed there until just before the Spitfire Boys went on. Then he came out front to watch.

I couldn't believe it. Roger Eagle saw him, immediately. Out he went. Then shit started. The Spitfire Boys refused to go on. Roger Eagle refused to budge. I reasoned with him. No reasoning. Paul and Hilary screamed their heads off at him. Nothing happened. It seemed like an hour - it was

more like 10 minutes. Finally, Roger relented and my bewildered young brother walked in - to cheers.

All the people who thought Eric's was full of posey planks could, now, fuck off. The camaraderie shown for a little 15-year-old kid was unbelievable. From then on, as far as I was concerned, they could all do whatever they wanted.

DECISIONS

Everybody was thrashing about in the dark, trying to figure out what you should be into, what you shouldn't be into, which people you could trust and which people were saying things just to look good. And everybody thought everybody else had the answer, but was keeping them in the dark, as some mean joke. And if that all sounds confused, it's because we were.

I was born to apologise. I was a product of middle-class aspirations. The middle classes apologise all the time and there was nothing I could do about it. I'm sorry, but that's all there is to it. It took no time, getting used to the Liverpool attitude - it was so hard-faced, I fell deeply in love with it.

The music scene stretched all around Liverpool, but we were still just fans. Only now were we starting real plans. I was hanging around with Pete Wylie and Duke and Dave Pickett. Most people seemed to know Duke as McCull. He was never comfortable with Duke, so, gradually, we weaned ourselves off calling him that.

The first Crucial Three rehearsal seemed like the last. We'd talk songs and ideas, but it got embarrassing when people wanted to hear something. I just got pissed off with saying things like, "Oh, McCull's got a brilliant idea for a song called 'Spacehopper'." I needed to jump in. I needed to jump right in.

But nearly everyone's group was still at the talk stage. Paul Simpson introduced me to Les Pattinson, the guy with the *Thunderbirds* head. He built boats in Aughton. At first, I'd thought Les was a bit of a latecomer, a fashion-punk. But now, he'd got his act together and looked off his head. He had a black nylon polo neck sweater on, with hipsters and a swinging medallion. His hair was very neat and platinum.

"I've gotta group called The Geoffs - I'm Geoff Lovestone and the other guys'll all be called Geoff." Then he sung us some great unaccompanied songs with titles like 'You, Me & the Sea', 'Outer Town / Outer Space' and 'I Can Face the World Now'. He told us that the music would be slow and Doors-y and that Geoff Lovestone would preach his songs, like Elvis

Presley doing 'The Battle-Hymn of the Republic'. I listened in awe. By the time that he was finished, I was very jealous of his imaginary group.

Wylie had a friend called Mick Finkler, who looked like Mick Jones from the Clash. He was 16 and he loved Wylie, and Wylie lived for Joe Strummer. So they would walk around being Strummer and Jones. One time, we re-enacted the sleeve of the first Clash album, standing motionless in the doorways at Eric's, with me as Paul Simonon. Smelly Elly said that it was very Gilbert & George.

Then one night, during the imaginary groups period, I walked into Eric's and watched a group of guys I vaguely knew playing a set of shifting, colliding, New York-sounding music. They were called Big in Japan.

I thought they were cool, so I talked to their guitarist, Bill Drummond. He was about five years older than me, very tall and good looking. He had a soft Scots accent and told me Big in Japan had formed two days before. They were all okay musicians and they had just explored, on stage, their riffs, evolving as they went along.

I was impressed. I could play music like that. I could play a riff all night. In Tamworth, I'd had a group with my friends Max, Cott and Gary that was based on the Cologne group Can. We were called Softgraundt. It was our German period. We had once recorded a 20-minute song called 'Bumschen' on Cott's reel-to-reel. We would just repeat a simple bass riff over a shuffle-beat. Max played these tiny spindly riffs and I would repeat the song title, like a chorus.

Yeah, if music went in that direction, I'd be the man for the job.

At college, exams were bringing chaos to everyone. They all staggered round under books and files, with hardly a smile for me and my enthusiasm. Hilary and Kathy Cherry were doing their finals and told me to buzz off. In Prescot Hall, I was banned from Candy's room. The atmosphere on campus shook me into action. June brought the search for next year's accommodation. I had to find a place to live and someone to live with. Nearly all of my hip new friends were still going home to mom and dad at night.

Chris Goodson, Ritchie Blofeld and I decided to get a house as close to Liverpool as we could find. But I had a student problem, a problem that was turning into a phobia. You see, the punk thing precluded your being friendly with students. Students were perceived as spineless, cop-out, do-nothing hippies. Hippies were even lower than that, since they revelled in their obsolete clothes and stank of patchouli oil.

But some of us punks were students. Indeed, all the ones with something to say were still in some form of higher education. Pete Wylie was at Liverpool University, the very place that had rejected me. What do we do? Walk around pretending to be thick. And then there were all the people caught in the middle - Chris Goodson was hipper, musically, than almost anyone else I knew. He soaked up all the stuff I played him, day in, day out, then blew my head off with Fugs' albums. But because he wasn't interested in the whole trip, Chris was to stay removed from the everyday physical threat of dockers and football supporters. He didn't tune in to the hang ups that were being aired.

See, as a 19 year old, I felt like nothing was truly mine. So when I got hold of this scene, I was pretty damn determined to make it right. Just hearing Little Feat or The Eagles wafting down some college corridor became an anathema to me. It was the music of passivity. In Liverpool, we felt a camaraderie with anyone who said, yes, there is an alternative to this bullshit. We would rush to the aid of any geek being threatened. I was on a martyr trip and everyone around me had to be on it too.

I'd explained this to Chris, over and over. Sometimes, I'd come back with a real attitude about stuff and I was at pains to show him that the friendship thing would always trash the "hip v unhip" question.

There was a line already forming to get a room in our house. I crossed off all the hippies and the planks, and that left us with just Terry and Sue McKee. We were all happy with this and that was our blueprint for a happy unhippy household. We found a big townhouse off Prescot Road, about two miles out of the city centre. If everything went to plan, no. 7 Laburnam Road would be our new scene in the upcoming months.

MONG-OUT

"I can put it away for you, if you want. Put a quid down now and we'll keep it for you."

The rich, reasonable tones of John Atherton wafted round me, as we stood, face to face, separated only by the counter of Probe Records. I looked down again at the mysterious shrink-wrapped sleeve. Imports, I bloody loved them.

Staring out of the red and black foreground was an Alfred E. Neumann cartoon Nazi, smiling blandly. In the background, tiny cartoon Hitler-couples jived and grooved together. In Teutonic lettering around the illustration was the announcement: "The Residents Present the Third Reich 'n' Roll". John Athey, as he was known, had taunted and tempted me with this stuff before. It was a collection of mid-'60s US Top 40 hits. Only, there was a difference. The songs had been reduced to shells and they all merged together. Sometimes, one song would feature a solo from a completely different song. And it was all played on piano, string synthesizer, percussion and the most wacked out vocals since the Muppets. It all sounded as though it took place in some obscure Tibetan monastery.

And why did I like it? I mean, shit, the tunes were all changed, the rhythms were changed. They'd even managed to turn 'Light My Fire' into a kind of 'I'm Yankee Doodle Dandy'. 'Gloria' was sung by a dying man clawing his way through some Dali-esque desert. It was happening in some ideal world, where the nerds, geeks and born losers were all running the show. If the characters in *Waiting for Godot* listened to Wonderful Radio 1, I believe it would have sounded like this.

"Get it," said Griff, who was with me. I mean, I had the money and all, but it would leave me without the bus fare. It was 32p back to Prescot. I'd be left with l2p, so I'd have to get the bus part of the way then walk.

Griff had no money at all. I'd bought him coffee already and he still had about 10 albums put away indefinitely. Shit, I thought, I'll buy it. When am I next going to have £4.79 to spend on one album? I handed the money to John. And we walked out and down the stairs of Probe into Button Street.

So, how would I get home? These things happened all the time. I'd go in the shop to buy something that I considered vital, only to leave with something far more vital.

I'd started leaving the standard stuff for Wylie to buy. He had loads more money than anyone else, as he now worked weekends in Probe. I was worried about him. I really admired his enthusiasm, but he had started to waste it on the Clash and Bruce Springsteen. I mean, the Boss?

Paul Simpson and Les Pattinson were listening to weird and interesting stuff. They had a friend called Will, who looked like Johnny Ramone, but loved Television and the Velvet Underground. Along with Griff and I, they were the most determined to try something. I liked McCull a lot, but sometimes the bravado and hang ups got to me. So when Griff and I hung around, it was a joy to buy the most fucked up music and read the most fucked up books, and look fucked up whilst you did it. And today, I was looking particularly retarded. In the charity shop, on London Road, I had found this disgustingly worn dog-tooth check thing that used to be a coat. It felt like I was wearing an old ironing-board cover. My head, my hands and my wrists stuck out way too far, and my still-scrubland hairstyle made me look like a real monkey-head.

After Probe, Griff showed me a weird little shop in Whitechapel. It was called News From Nowhere and it seemed like a kind of literary Probe. We looked through the rows of heavy comics and the enormous bound art books, and Griff read me some William Burroughs. Like your average "A" level geek, I'd tried it before, but as *Nova Express* was mainly cut-ups, I'd given it five minutes.

But now, Griff read an excerpt from *Junkie* to me. He read in book form. He read some more, then he pointed out a book called *Leaving the 20th Century* by the International Situationists.

"This is where McLaren got all the Pistols' sleeve ideas."

There was a photograph of a modern family at home. Each person or object was captioned: "Nice man", "Nice woman", "Nice dog", "Nice house". It just went on and on.

The bookshop had a reading area, so we stayed and checked through everything. You could make your own tea in the kitchen, if you paid 15p. We didn't.

It was getting late, but I'd kept putting off leaving. Griff lived a 20-minute walk away, in Gambier Terrace, up behind the Anglican cathedral. Finally, we left the shop and walked round to the row of bus shelters opposite St. John's Precinct. Griff waited with me and two minutes later, I jumped on an H8

Crosville bus, bound for Prescot.

If you ever take a bus from Liverpool to Prescot, make sure you avoid the H8. It takes forever and it goes through Huyton. No, you're far better off with the 10, 9C or 176. Straight up Prescot Road. Forty minutes and you're there.

But now I was sitting over the driver, upstairs, at the front of the H8. I was sitting amongst a group of old men, on an inside seat. I sat utterly still, with my right cheek occasionally against the glass. In my eyes was such a look of bland unawareness that I appeared to be making the old men around me uncomfortable. I couldn't have that, as they were part of my cover, so I backed off on the psycho expression.

I had got aboard the bus fully intending to pay the minimum fare, then pretend to fall asleep. But, luckily, the bus was full of pensioners. The couples all sat downstairs, very politely and quietly. But old guys together are still a gang. And they still like to go upstairs and they like their part of the bus to themselves. So they sat at the front, on the outside seats, and talked to each other across the aisle.

I had to almost force my way into my seat and as I sat amongst these old guys I realised that I could be one of them. Well, not one of them, I thought, I'll just be with them. For 12 miles I pretended to be the backward son of the old guy next to me. He didn't know. He and his gang thought I was just weird.

Every so often, the conductor checked us, but I was way too convincing. It wasn't my acting. It was my look.

Also, it was one of those days when you do something, it works out, and then you wish that you'd known in advance that it was going to work, so you could have enjoyed it while it was happening.

END OF TERM BYE-BYE

At college, everything was shutting down. The exams were over. We'd secured the house in Laburnam Road. And I'd formulated a plan that wasn't pretty, but seemed likely to work. I was going to forget college, get a group together, write some songs and make a living. I had already told all my friends. I had to do it or I'd be slagged off as a dickhead.

My biggest problem was money. My grant had been so pitiful that most of what I'd been spending in Liverpool was from my parents. I felt heavy guilt about that. I'd turned 19 the previous October and now I wanted to run my own life.

Until now, I'd been spending my folks' money on records and hanging out. When I felt poor, it was because I'd overspent on bullshit. I knew, in my head, that it was a fake situation and I could not take myself seriously whilst it continued.

The summer in Liverpool brought a state of limbo to the scene. People went on holiday, families were visited, the Spitfire Boys went on a mini-tour and ideas were left to simmer.

I decided that I needed a job. A summer job. Anything, really, so long as I could make some proper money. That way, come September, I could go on the dole and spend my savings on equipment and extras.

I looked around Liverpool for about half an hour. There were no jobs. Oh yeah, I'd heard about this before. For a while, I was stuck. Then the Cope family rescue-squad came to my aid.

My father and I were talking on a college pay-phone. We were trying to patch things up, as it had all got way out of hand. My mother and I weren't speaking - I was turning Joss into a delinquent, putting guys in hospital and hanging around with such weird-looking people that she couldn't sleep at night. "Look," said my father, "come home and work. I'll find you a job. You'll only be here six weeks or so and she'll get some rest." I said that it was a good plan and we hung up.

It was a good plan, but it still bothered me. I kept wondering if I'd ever be free of them. Everything my father did for me made me feel worse. It was my problem and it was my guilt. I'll do the job and shut up, I thought.

I had seen Kathy Cherry occasionally after the Clash night. There was no romance, but we were good friends and I enjoyed our sex. Also, she became far more interested after Hilary's friend Sue gave me a lift down to Tamworth one time. At the end of a letter to Hilary, Sue had written: "All my love to Julian. Tell him that the shag in the lay-by was perfect."

Of course nothing had happened, but a person is far more desirable if you think your friend wants to bed them.

Within a week, my father had a list of potential jobs. He phoned me constantly, describing each one in detail. I wanted money. That was the reason for doing it. I wanted money and the least hassle I could get away with.

The end of term was looming large. I had no reason to be there. I'd left my stuff at Laburnam Road, as Chris would be there over the summer. I said goodbye to anyone who was around and took a train down to Tamworth.

SEWAGE

And so it came to be that in July 1977, I did arrive promptly at Alder's Paper Mills, be-punked and ready for work.

In Liverpool, I was verbally abused hourly and physically abused occasionally. In Tamworth, there was almost no abuse of any sort. Instead, there was disbelief. They just stared, as if to say, "Why would he look like that?" I might as well have dressed in a Mickey Mouse outfit.

It galled me that I couldn't get to them. And I knew there was no point in trying. I decided to just do my time and hope that they didn't get me when I was asleep.

The morning sun made the 5 a.m. alarm bearable. Indeed, from the first day, it appeared that the early shift was the best. Between the hours of 6 a.m. and 2 p.m., I'd normally vegetate. I hated sunrise, just because I'd never seen it. It had never seemed hip to be into mornings.

I quickly settled into my routine. I would wake at 5 a.m. and dress quickly. Than I'd ride Joss's racing bike the six miles across town to the industrial estate where Alder's Paper Mill was situated. We would work from 6 a.m. until 2 p.m. with a 9.30 breakfast and an 11 o'clock tea-break. Then I'd get back on the bike and bomb home to my parents' house in Glascote. The rest of the day would be spent with Joss, working out our thing.

Alder's is an enormous place. It's a part of Tamworth's history and has been there since my father was a kid. There are five main areas and in the six weeks I got to work in all of them.

The largest building was the size of an aircraft hangar. It housed the pulp machine, which was as big as a rugby pitch. The pulp got sloshed in at one end, then it travelled through these enormous gears and vats, bubbling and stinking its way to the end, where it miraculously turned into unrefined paper. The paper was thick and soapy, like thousands of square feet of old bath sponge.

I got to know this machine well, as I was soon invited to clean the fucking thing. I'd been working in the quiet of the machine shop, as a mechanic's

mate. The mechanics were all bikers in their late twenties. They'd have their bikes in the machine shop, fixing them up and taking total liberties. One of them gave me his old leathers and I'd tell them stories and stuff. My engineer was called Terry.

Then one day, we were called over to the pulp machine. They had shut it down, and it burbled and stunk like a swamp. We walked to a grating about 100 yards along the machine. Terry removed it and we crawled on our hands and knees into the web of gears and along under the main flow of pulp. The heat and the damp and the stench ... I had to breathe through my mouth to stop myself gagging. The only light came from the lamps in our hard-hats and I felt cocooned, as though in some vast mechanical rainforest.

Terry told me that the drainage was all blocked. We were going to have to climb into the main sewer. I directed my lantern beam at the manhole cover. It was covered with a thick layer of rotten pulp. Terry hacked the pulp away with a claw hammer. He hacked and he hacked until the cover was exposed, then he heaved it open and we started to choke.

Whoever came up with the phrase "bowels of hell" had been down that sewer. If you collected all your neighbourhood's garbage and stored it in your house for a year, then dug up all the dead from your local cemetery and cooked them on stoves around your house, after a while, it would start to smell as bad as this did.

We stuffed our hands over our faces and searched for our masks. Down there, in the gloaming, everything soon became covered with a thick film of sticky residue. We decided to forget about the masks and began the descent down the slippery ladder.

I passed down Terry's enormous canvas bag and followed him. The sewer pipe was about five feet high and cylindrical. A river of sewage flowed silently along and we stood crouching, our feet struggling for grip on the sewer walls.

Terry had hung his bag on the ladder. He took out two lanterns and gave one to me. Then we walked along the pipe, looking for blockages. The

worst was in a large pipe about 20 feet from the sewer entrance. It should have been flowing freely, but nothing was coming out.

Terry hung his lantern on a hook by the pipe and we climbed out of the hell-hole. Back over in the machine shop, Terry weighed me down with shovel, scraper, rake and a long thing like a hoe. I was on my own.

For three days, I prodded and hacked and cursed the sewage out of the blocked pipes. By 9.30 every morning, I stunk so much I had to have breakfast on my own.

It was overwhelmingly hot down there. I'd rest by sitting over the sewage, my boots jammed against one side of the pipe, my ass against the other.

Then one day, I awoke to Terry's voice calling down the man-hole. I was missing breakfast. I'd fallen asleep and slid down into the sewage. My body had acted like a dam.

Around that time, the Stranglers had a song out called 'Down in the Sewer'. It seemed to be advocating hanging out down there. I know it sounds glamorous, but believe me, it sucks.

THE VIKINGS

That summer, I spent the weekends in Liverpool or London. One time, my parents drove me up to the house in Laburnam Road. We took up paint and carpet and bedclothes, and we transformed this dingy little shitty attic into a cool pad in about eight hours.

One Friday night, the Spitfire Boys played in Birmingham. Hilary and Kathy Cherry came down from Leeds, and we all hung out on our own, in a totally empty club. That night, we all left for London. Kathy and I were alone in the back of the hired Luton van. We lay on Budgie's mattress and fucked all the way down the M1.

After that night, Kathy and I kind of fell into a relationship. She was looking for her Daryl substitute. I was trying to forget Jane. And, over the weeks, she came to visit me more and more.

As the summer stretched on, my moods swung all over the place. I was excited at the thought of being let loose in Liverpool, but my mother continually expressed her lack of faith in what I wanted. She'd cry and say she couldn't sleep for worrying. I tried to appease her, at first. But this kind of thing had gone on all through my childhood and I wasn't going to give in. No way. If I fell on my ass, then at least I fell doing what I wanted.

Meanwhile, back at the paper mill, I was making £75 a week. It seemed like a hell of a lot, so I spent shitloads on records and gave my parents £20 a week for board.

I was working on the Strachan-Henshaw, this huge polished paper machine that stretched, like a gleaming metal crab, across half the length of the main workroom. I told the three other guys on the Strachan-Henshaw that it reminded me of the Mare of Steel, the massive execution machine in the film *The Longships*. I loved the Strachan-Henshaw, I couldn't stop saying that name.

The radio played continuously through tannoys: Radio 1 at full treble. One day, Sag, an enormous biker guy who wore a headscarf, climbed on to the Strachan-Henshaw during 'Radar Love' and started to dance. Then I got up

there and danced, and then Sag's brother Tommy, he got up and started dancing.

We had the coolest team. Sag and Tommy used to bait me about "punk rock". They'd name all these shit groups that had hits and were really The Faces speeded up, then they'd say, "They're all fuckin' shit." Then, they'd look at me and expect me to say, "No, no, you misunderstand, my friend, this is the new music." But I never would. So then they were reduced to slagging off my appearance, which made me laugh, considering that Sag looked like Henry VIII and Tommy had his hair cut by the council. And they were the coolest guys in Tamworth. But you had to work with them for a month to find out.

SCHICKSA

My parents hated Jane. My friends hated Jane. Whoever she went out with after me, that guy's parents and friends would have hated her too.

See, she was an obsessive. An obsessive who wanted only to be with her man. While we were alone, she was happy. We were at peace. For almost three years, we would hole up wherever we were and pretty much ignore the rest of the world. Yeah, Jane and I were together for almost three years.

But now, it was August 1977. And I had broken off with her almost 10 months before. In that time, Jane had stuck, pretty much, to the plan she said she'd implement if I ever finished with her. She had gone out with two of my closest friends and fucked them both.

Now she was gone. My parents were ecstatic. My mother said, "Every time I saw that stupid pout, I wanted to slap her face." That's why I loved her - she was one of the snottiest girls I'd ever known. And will ever know.

Time was passing, but she stuck in my head. Sometimes, it was such a drag that she was missing all this fun. I'd remember all the cat-fights we used to have. She'd stand an inch from my face and just scream her fucking head off. That was the standard argument, till one fight at a bus stop. It went something like:

"Well then, Fuck Yewww, Cope." She's an inch from my face.

"Fuck you, too, Smith." I'm really matter of fact.

"Fuck Right Off." She's pissed off at my composure.

"Ditto."

"Oh, Fuck Off Cope, Ditto?"

"Yeah ... Anyway, I'm going." I smile my blandest smile and turn around.

By the time I'm 10 yards away, she's screaming her head off: "Well then, fuckin' fuck you, you fuck."

I turn around, to stare her out. I'm still walking backwards and she's turned and started to walk away. Two people at the bus-stop are caught in the cross-fire of "Fuck offs". And it doesn't let up, either.

On that day, we continued screaming the same two words at each other until the other was out of sight. That argument was a whole art-statement. A verbal *Metal Machine Music*.

I'd think about these things. No wonder I missed her. I mean, we got into John Cale together. And she got me into The Doors. And she was the only other person I knew who'd listen to 'Soup' by Can and enjoy it, and know it. My friend, Maxwell Eacock, used to put on 'Sister Ray' by the Velvet Underground, then work in the garden. He said he knew it was good, he just couldn't take it.

Anyway, Jane was out of my life now. For good.

Then, one weekend, it happened. My parents were away with Joss in Norfolk. Kathy was busy in Leeds. I had nothing to do.

On Saturday night, I went for a drink in the aptly named Tweedale Arms. I was never a pub-head, but I was with Hutch, a guy who had helped make school life bearable. And we were having a cool time and acting really camp and twee, in honour of the pub.

Then Jane Elizabeth Smith walked in. She looked great. Actually, she swanned in, like she swanned everywhere. She stared at me from across the room, then she walked over to us. Still staring at me, in a blank pissed-off manner, she started talking to Hutch.

The atmosphere was black. Jane wasn't listening to Hutch. She wasn't paying attention to either of us. I think it was a coincidence that she came in and now she was here, she may as well spoil our night.

Finally, I told Hutch that I needed to talk to Jane. The two of us left him in the Tweedale and headed off to the Castle Grounds, and to crying and misery.

It turned into one of those nights. A "what if" night. We wailed and hugged in a children's playground for hours and hours, then we took a taxi and

sobbed all the way to my parents' house. Amidst tears and confusion, we stripped the clothes off each other and had really terrible sex.

And it was over. The whole thing. The spell was broken and we could get on with our lives. Jane agreed. Maybe we'd just needed to finish it properly. Now it was over. I love you, Jane, wherever you are.

7 LABURNAM ROAD

The summer was drawing to a close and the shit in my hair and skin was, finally, beginning to wash out. Tamworth had resolved many things, both in my head and in my past.

I had two trunks bound for Liverpool. One was full of all my records, from the childhood Tom Lehrer phase all the way to the clang of the Yankee imports that I'd recently accumulated. The other trunk was chock full of household necessities and family heirlooms. My Auntie Sheila had given me a slow-cooker.

"Just sling a few vegetables in it when you go out. You'll have a stew ready when you come back."

My mother had packed piles of old sheets and blankets, and Nana, my Welsh grandmother, had sent these beautiful hand-made quilts. They'd been in the family for years. One was 90 years old. I'd never give my teenage son anything that special. I'd be too worried about his friends nicking it for use in dirty sexual liaisons and its being dumped in a hallway afterwards, where a cat could sleep on it for six months.

My parents remained baffled by my plans, but the decision was made and they didn't want to fight me. Jane was finally purged from my "wants" list and my friendship with Kathy Cherry had taken over.

This last event was still concerning me. I was lazy in love. I let things drift sometimes and we'd fallen into a routine that I had instigated after the final Jane episode. Kathy was a sweet girl, but I wasn't going to get serious.

Meanwhile, I had the house to myself. This huge house that could be so beautiful, I thought. The rooms were dingy through years of student grime. No way was this becoming a student household.

My room had a skylight. I'd always wanted one for the garret atmosphere. The sun tore through the glass in the mornings, but I wouldn't cover that skylight. Dammit, I thought, people would kill for this room. So, every day for a week, I woke up at 7 a.m. dazzled by Mr Sun. Then very early

one morning, in a fit of pique, I covered the skylight with tinfoil and banished the morning for good.

As my clean, fresh, white room was right at the top of the house, I figured maybe the entrance to the room should look as good. I painted the stairway almost down to the next floor, leaving a jagged edge on the wall. It was like a demarcation line. Then I found a roll of '30s stair-carpet for £3 in a junk shop. I painted the bannister the same green that was in the carpet and hung two of my grandmother's paintings on the walls of the stairway. I really got my ass in gear.

Chris Goodson arrived a week later. He walked into my room and would not leave. He said he felt dirty in the rest of the house. We spent the next days fixing his room up and soon I was jealous of him. Then we formed a group. We were called Hungry Types which, on reflection, is a shitty name, but suited a group whose line-up was piano, occasional slide guitar and household percussion.

The piano was already in the house. Actually, it was in the living room. This was to cause problems later for the others, as the piano and I became inseparable. I couldn't understand their reluctance to listen to me and called them Philistines. Recently, I found all the Hungry Types tapes. They were right. I sucked shit. A piano is also a beautiful piece of furniture and I might as well have been playing the three-piece suite or the chest of drawers.

Anyway, for two dear weeks, Chris and I hammered away on the piano, while I played him my ever-increasing Residents collection. I played him *Meet the Residents*. The jacket is a piss-take of the first Beatles LP. The music, however, is all piano and voices and, wait for it, what seemed to me to be household percussion. Perfect. In two days, Chris' old cassette player had recorded about six LPs' worth of unlistenable shit. One instrumental is 25 minutes long and has me playing the same riff over and over, while Chris "shapes" the music with "found sounds". At least, that's what I'd say if I was Dave Byrne. I'm not, so let's change that "found sounds" to "slide-acoustic with coffee-mug bottle neck and any bits of the tea service that he happened to pick up".

I played Chris the 'Streetwaves' and '30 Seconds over Tokyo' 45s by Pere Ubu. He freaked out. We played them over and over. This was the kind of music that I wanted to play. It was rock'n'roll underneath, but stripped right down and replaced by a kind of ambience of industrial noise. The Pere Ubu 45s had no instrumentation on the sleeves. What the fuck was it?

I had lots of "What's that?" going through my head. Every time I played *Nuggets*, The 13th Floor Elevators would come on. "What's that weird noise?" everyone would say, about this kind of "dooga dooga-dooga" sound in the background. But we just did not know.

Sometimes I would face stiff opposition from the TV addicts in the house, as the piano was in the same room. I'd be forced to use severe psychology and invite them all to play in the group for the evening. I'd hand them things that were virtually inaudible and every so often I'd tell them how much they were contributing. Placate, placate. Except, of course, for Ritchie. Like some Solipsist from Hell, he'd scream out demented lead vocals whenever we needed to rock. [Hungry Types recorded a song entitled 'Oh, Dear Ritchie' which listed all the fine attributes as well as eulogising the downsizable downside of Mr Blofeld. Seven years later, the melody and music of this song were cannibalised for the Fried LP's 'Search Party'.]

Kathy Cherry was staying with me until she found her own place. She'd started to teach mentally-handicapped kids. We got on really well and would go down to Eric's together. Laburnam Road was only two and a half miles away, so we walked it all the time. Hilary was now with Paul Simpson. It had started just before college ended and we made a good occasional foursome. Paul had the use of his mother's car, so through September and October of '77 we drove around Liverpool all the time and I got some sense of the shape of the place.

When Paul and Hilary split up, he got this one-room flat at 14 Rodney Street. It was £7.50 a week. And it was in the centre of town. It soon became a hang-out and port of call for both the cool people and the crazies.

"Smelly Elly's up here. He's been here all morning. He's walking round the flat, hitting vases and shit with a biro. It just goes 'dunk', and then he says,

'Uhm, interesting sound,' to himself."

I knew how to deal with Mr Ellerbeck. We left him upstairs and went to a cafe for breakfast. When we came back, he was sitting in Paul Simpson's armchair. Completely unfazed. I loved the guy, I really did. But only in theory. The reality of Smelly Elly did people's heads in. Kathy and Hilary hated him openly.

One day, at Eric's, he said to Paul Rutherford, "Before you and Paul Simpson were around, everyone called me Paul. But now, I'm just Smelly Elly." It was so sad and so true. I mean, what d'you say?

After about a week of her looking for flats, it became apparent that Kathy and I hit it off. I didn't invite her to stay, but I never told her to sod off. I just said, "Look, I'm poor, I'm starting a group, give me space and we'll be fine." It was the typical non-commital male thing. And if it sounds unromantic, that's because it was.

TOO DECAYED

Sometimes, you wake up in the morning, you know you've had no sleep but this thing in your head keeps going noogy, noogy, noogy, and presents itself to you. You can even laugh at the stupid psychology of the exercise. It's just your brain, which you'd always thought was a cool brain (because it's your brain) and it's saying, "Be afraid. Be very afraid." It doesn't happen to everyone. It only happens to you and you can't tell anyone else as how the hell would they understand?

And that was me, every morning. The October sun would teem through the tin-foiled skylight and scatter restlessness on my sleeping form, like the magic sprinkles from the wands of Disney witches. At 7 a.m., I'd lie awake, looking up at nothing, waiting for 8 o'clock, when Kathy would wake and dress quietly for work.

What had I done? Where was this group? Shit, man, I can't play anything. Will anyone ask me to play bass for them? I'm sure I could. But who'll ask me?

My head would rage each day at this time. Then Kathy would leave for work and Chris would surface around nine. The feeling would slink away as the day established itself and I was free. Until the next day, when it would happen again.

I was creeping towards 20. Uncool. Nineteen was the punk age to be. All my friends here were 18 or 19. Except the others, but I didn't count them, I only wanted examples who fuelled my arguments against myself. You see, in one month, I'd expected to get this group thing all sewn up. Everyone felt the same. We were known faces and if we got a group together, we'd play Eric's and be given help by anyone who could. And yet, all around Liverpool, groups were springing up, doing well and sounding like shit. Oh, man.

"We just haven't got a clue what to do."

We'd hear the same story every week. Someone is playing with so-and-so. Oh sorry, they've split up. Always different combinations of the same group of people.

Big in Japan had blown it for me. They now had a girl singer and Holly on bass. Much as I dug Holly, it seemed inappropriate for a jarring Television sounding quartet to work with a crazy 17-year-old bleach-baby with "Dogsex" written in his hair. Also, the singer was Jayne Casey. She looked like Holly, too. They both seemed unfinished. Jayne had these off-their-head outfits, where her tits and her ass defied whatever the music told her body to do. Singing. Never. Jayne just opened her big mouth and screamed blue bloody murder. Also, and more to the point, I thought she was the sexiest thing in Liverpool, and I hated to admit it, even to myself.

I hung around with Paul Simpson, or Simmo, as he hated to be called. McCulloch and I were a little in awe of Simmo. His mother was a Spiritualist and she said that he was going to be world famous. He had his flat in Rodney Street and he did not a thing, but he spoke with such authority that I never noticed quite exactly how much he copied David Bowie. If I like someone, I tend to bleep out all their bullshit traits so I can get on with the job of liking them.

Anyway, McCull, Simmo and I became a gang, a triumvirate. We were well-balanced, although one would always feel jealous if the other two were together. I had a massive crush on both of them. They were delicate and queer looking, whereas I was too psycho to cut it when I pansied out. Anyway, for a long while we talked a good group. Then, amidst the talk, something happened.

One Eric's night, Wylie was talking to Peter Burns and they had an idea for a group. Then I said I'd play and a junkie-looking drummer called Phil Hurst also agreed.

Okay, we'll do one gig, just all the stuff we like, really quickly. Fuck all that "Is it good? What if it sucks shit?"

Suddenly, Laburnam Road was besieged with drum-kits, make-up and Peter's entourage. The household freaked out. Sue McKee was so offended by the Burns' collective appearance that she left the house during each rehearsal.

Wylie and I got a simple set together. We learned 'I Can See for Miles', 'Doo-Wah-Diddy-Diddy-Um-Diddy-Ay', 'Wild Thing' and 'Someone Like

Me' by The Shadows of Knight. That last song I had found in a junk shop in Tamworth during the summer. Wylie had some riffs that we turned into songs. I had a riff I'd ripped off The Heartbreakers, which later became a song called 'Bouncing Babies'.

We hadn't even bothered to find out if Peter could sing. "Course he can," said Wylie. "Look at him."

Wylie was right, the rehearsals were easy, Peter Burns had as snotty a voice as you'd wish to hear. Phil Hurst was a plank, though, and his looking like Richard Hell didn't help his cause any. Still, we had a set ready in about a week and the Laburnam Road crowd were still speaking to me.

A week later, we supported, wait for it, Sham 69, the latecomers of the revolution. Oh, cruel fate. Eric's was a sea of out-of-town swillheads, all ready for *Bob's Full House*. And we'd called ourselves The Mystery Girls, too. We strolled on stage to abuse and indifference. Wylie had a toilet-seat on his back and Peter did his best Wayne County-isms. We finished with 'The Night Time is the Right Time' and roared off the stage.

I'd played a gig. I'd played the bass at a gig. That was all I needed to know. I could do it.

The group split immediately. We dug it and all, but it wasn't what we wanted to do.

I turned 20 that week. I wrote a pro-teen song as a final statement. I called it 'Two Decayed' and recorded it with Chris. It just said: "I'm two decades old, two decades old, too decayed to know what's going on." It was all downhill from here.

IT'S A MOVING THING

As Kathy and I became a couple, we started to get stuff that couples want. We started to get pissed off at the lack of privacy in the house. We found hippies in the house, people we didn't want to know. My grandmother's chamber pot became a weapon against these people.

I've always got up three or four times to pee during the night. And I've always had a chamber pot, as a necessity rather than a luxury. Otherwise I'd piss on the floor and that's gross. Anyway, now the hippies were around, I just dumped the whole lot out of the skylight on the off-chance of hitting one as he arrived.

Then one night, Kathy and I arrived home from Eric's. There were hippies everywhere, sleeping on the furniture and on the stairs. As we climbed up towards our attic, there seemed to be more and more, and then we opened our bedroom door. A guy in our bed. A guy in our fucking bed.

"Jonathan Lee, get out of this room." I knew the guy. I knew him well. I even liked the guy, but I was pissed off as hell.

After that, we had to move. The washing up never got done. The place was a tip. I developed an attitude. I expected everyone there to welcome my friends in, even though my friends could be pretty rude. I welcomed their friends with a pot full of piss.

Then we got a cat who would shit indoors. I decided to leave while we were all still friends. Kathy and I, and Babylon the cat, moved into a drab damp bedsit across the road in Prospect Vale. The dole decided that I was Kathy's common-law husband and stopped my money. We lived on her £30 a week and food parcels from our parents. Baked potatoes and beans every night. Arguments would flare up. One of us was using up all the butter. Being poor is bullshit. Jesus Christ said that the poor will always be with us. No shit, Sherlock.

McCull moved into the Ellerbeck household in Belmont Road. He was into Smelly Elly in a big way. I thought it was great. Now we can start writing some songs. But although we were only about a mile apart, we'd still just meet in Probe and talk ideas.

Wylie drifted away, getting another idea group together. We felt left out. Wylie had the energy, the contacts, everything. We were really just jealous as hell, and lazy. Give us the deal. Give us the equipment. Tell us what to write about.

If one person started a group that looked like it had a chance, the rest of us would be so scornful of it that it would crumble under the pressure. Another group would start. We'd bitch to each other, so green with jealousy and feeling so left out that we became inert vegetables. Then the group would fail. Suddenly, the pressure was off. We'd welcome the failure back, praising his efforts and sighing with relief. We were a family again. We wanted the others to do well, but only if we could be included. The whole scene was so incestuous that it was suffocating itself.

This imaginary conversation, between imaginary characters, is the best way to describe it:

"What d'you think of Wylie's new group?"

"Am I in the group?"

"No."

"They're crap."

And so on, and so on.

By Christmas, no-one had moved. You never do, when you spend all your time watching the others. The phrase "chill out" was still not invented. And we were all anti-drugs, so we just stayed tense as hell.

I spent Christmas in Tamworth. Kathy went to Leeds. On December 27th, at Eric's, the Spitfire Boys played their final show. The end of 1977 signified the end of punk. It was over just in time, too. The punk scene moved to a club called the Swinging Apple, along with the dickheads and the Nazis and all the other counter-revolutionaries.

Eric's became a snobby snotty little scene. And I was as snotty as anyone else. You always are, when you're on the inside.

GROW YOUR HAIR

The leathers I'd waited so long for. The hair I'd worked so hard at. The whole thing was over. Mark Smith was right. Get your V-necked sweater on. His girlfriend, Kay, writes hippy poems at the end of his letters. He addresses me "Dear Jules Verne". Is that the work of the tortured artist? Would a faker have the nerve to allow that sort of thing? You're damn right they would. Mark Smith's a genius. Did you see The Fall the other night? Sod Mo Tucker, Una Baines is the new heroine.

The Fall shot through us all. But not like they hit McCull, Dave Pickett and myself. We were goners. They didn't even have records out. You had to see them live to hear them and I saw them 28 times in 1978.

That was the brilliance of Mark Smith. His proximity. All the uncool thoughts you'd have, he'd say. I was ashamed of my songs at this time. They were so educated. Not wordy, but too pleased with themselves. Then Mark Smith writes 'The Mess of My Age' and I think that's educated too. But it's wise, so it's OK.

He should have worn leathers occasionally. That would have freaked us right out. McCull and I were in awe of Mark. He wouldn't pull a star trip, which was kind of more starry in a way, because then he was even more like the person you wanted to be. And that way, he pulled a lot of shit out of us that we were scared of with the others.

With hindsight, I'll say that the main reason anything started to happen was because of Mark. He had very shamanistic qualities, a particular ability to draw the best from people.

January 1978, I came home with a prize beyond prizes. It was *The Modern Dance*, the first album by Pere Ubu. Probe got it the week it came out in America. It had no UK release date. Maybe there was no point yet.

A whole album. And it was a classic. It started something in me which affected everything I did after it. It starts with this metal yowl called 'Non-Alignment Pact', a classic "girl" song with the most Stooged-out riff. In fact, the record sounds like The Electric Prunes, The Troggs and The Stooges all got their songs rerecorded for the *Eraserhead* soundtrack.

Simmo, Will Sargeant and I shit. Just a million ideas in one record. McCull arrived late and said he hated it, but it wasn't Bowie, so what did he know? What about his "first one at school into The Stooges and the Velvets" claims? He was just like everybody else. I've sussed you Mac, I thought, you seek approval from others before you decide if it's okay to like it. Oh, this was a drag. His hating Pere Ubu could mean only one thing: he was a plank. I had to form a group right now.

I rushed around to Griff's flat and formed The Nova-Mob. Griff had the new Suicide album and was on a similar trip to me. We looked up names in William Burroughs' *Nova Express*. It had to be Burroughs as he was so fucking trendy, nobody had got round to realising he was brilliant as well. I'd see real dudes carrying his books. I'd think, Yeah, I really believe *this* guy. These guys read their Burroughs books as often as they played 'The Celebration of the Lizard' or 'Vitamin C' or 'Sister Ray'. In other words, never.

You get into the very middle of Burroughs' trip and no way is it not drugs. The same way as the film *Blue Velvet* is drugs and hanging out of a helicopter is drugs. But I digress.

The Nova-Mob was a huge hit with everyone. Pete Wylie joined and said we should all sing. Then Budgie joined. He said he wouldn't use a drum-kit and we all rushed around finding metal and pipes and stuff. We rehearsed every day in the coffee shop in Kirklands. We'd buy one coffee each and talk the songs together.

I had an epic called 'Passendale' which we all got excited about, but it never quite got written. Griff was still entranced and obsessed by the International Situationists' book *Leaving the 20th Century* and we sat for hours staring at all the strange literature sent to us from San Francisco by the Residents. Even the packaging and the franking on the stamps fascinated us.

"Ignorance of your culture is not considered cool," proclaimed the Residents. Awlright! If the music was taking too long in coming together, surely we could immortalise ourselves in some other way.

We released a limited edition T-shirt. Big in Japan were Liverpool's biggest group, so their singer Jayne Casey was emblazoned across it. Then we started a petition to get Big in Japan to split up. We were going to be the pettiest group in the world. ·

Of course, Bill Drummond was into the whole thing and told us we needed 14,000 signatures, then they'd split up. We got about nine. I was pissed off. I mean, where was people's pettiness?

Finally, we called our own bluff and headlined one night at Eric's, after Penetration, the main group, pulled out. We did one song, a 15-minute chant that went:

> "We're in love with beauty, we're in love with wealth,
>
> We're in love with mental health."

It grunged on and on. It was crap. McCull hated that one. It took me ages to live it down. To top it off, Budgie sold us out and joined Big in Japan. Still, Wylie and I were back in the fold and everyone could rest easy again.

Mac and I made our peace. Even the briefest musical sortie was a help. But I now knew I wanted a group, not some art statement. Even my favourite Hungry Types pieces had those which were most songlike. All through the spring of '78, we sat in the Prospect Vale bedsit, banging out ideas. Simmo played boxes, radios, anything that came to hand.

And Mac sung.

He grew bored with being precious and just, one day, started to sing. His voice was brilliant. Very Lou Reed, very Iggy, but his own thing.

We played each other's songs or beat new ones together. Mac started playing 'Stepping Out' by The Fall. I improvised a melody for it. Next day, Mac had written words. "It's called 'I've Read It in Books'," he said. Shit, we thought, this is easy.

I gave him my heaviest, heaviest, straight out of 'Fun house' riff. "It's called 'Stammheim'," I said. He wrote the words in five minutes. It was recorded in ten.

After that, it was easy. We had loads of songs. Acoustic stuff with titles like 'Robert Mitchum' and 'Jefferson Davis', and war-zone riffs that I'd write, with maybe one or two notes in the riff. Mac would lie on the floor and just repeat the ass off those words.

'You Think It's Love' was my pride and joy. I ripped off James Williamson big style on that one. We recorded a 12-minute version, complete with Mac shrieking like Iggy on *Metallic K.O.*, "Take it down, take it down, lemme in," until I get crazy and my amp falls on him.

"What a maniac," cackles Mac as the distortion envelopes him. I was excited as all hell. We could be the fucking pig's business if we carry on like this.

We called this writing group Uh?, a Dave Pickett expression and an intentionally lame name. See, this was work. We knew something could come of it, but we weren't in a hurry. Simmo didn't write. He kind of postured on our behalf. If Mac and I got too embarrassing, he'd rush out and buy milk.

"Eh, Julian, 'ave got this song, 'Iggy Pop'." Mac was deadly serious as he showed me the most low-grade riff of all time. It was Buddy Holly doing 'Surfin' Bird ':

> "Uh-er, Iggy Pow-uh-op, Uh-er, Iggy Pow-uh-op,
>
> At the high-school hop, at the high-school hop."

It was a lost classic. It really was. I'm not sentimental for the most part. I know what is good and a lot of this stuff did suck. But, just sometimes, it was fucking brilliant.

Never again. No way would I fall for the serious artist schtick. If you repeat the words "Iggy Pop" for long enough, sure it's art. It's a homage,

the way a homage should be sung. None of this "Here's a clever lyric." No, these guys love Iggy so much they just repeat his name, with gleeful intensity, for five minutes. I'd love to record it, but I can't. Only fucked-up teens should do that kind of thing when it's pure.

Mac and I hitched around to see The Fall all that spring. Dave Pickett was at school and Simmo was too hung up. He wasn't going to be mistaken for a groupie! I'd slept on the floor of Piccadilly bus station to see Pere Ubu's first UK show. And they were fantastic. If I was as cool as Simmo, I'd have missed out on half the important shit.

We played tapes to Mark E. and Mac would hide in the loo. I had no shame though. If I was a plank, Mark E. would have sussed me. Besides, who cares?

One night, the three of us walked back to Mark's flat in Prestwich. Mac started singing, "You don't notice time on the Bury New Road," so I did mouth-slide-guitar and Mark added extra words. Months later, I remembered that with a fondness that almost pissed me off.

Simmo and Will Sargeant had Industrial / Domestic, a noise group with two guitars, through echo units. We joined up the two groups one time at Will's house and recorded a version of 'Satisfaction' and the Big in Japan theme song. Will played way off key all the time. It sounded great, but I thought he was so weird that I couldn't tell if it was intentional.

I used to get crazy around some people, especially anyone who thought I was too much. I really dug Will, so I'd dance around him, and he was quiet, so it did his head in.

But I couldn't back off. I just loved this scene and these people so much. When I was around them, I was always drunk with glee. It was a problem I had.

JUST A SHALLOW MADNESS

The months stretched out and spring was here before we had really done anything. Kathy and I were living on nothing and weeks would go past when Mac, Paul Simpson and I would sit, inert, in the Prospect Vale bedsit. We'd walk most of the way into Liverpool to save money.

I had loads of records put by in Probe. I found all The Seeds' albums for £1.70 each and was paying off £l per week. Mac and I wrote loads of goofy songs, but nothing usable until one day in April when we wrote 'Robert Mitchum' and 'Jefferson Davis'. They sounded okay and it finally happened. We played on stage. Me, Mac and Dave Pickett. Uh?

Wylie had joined a Dolls / Heartbreakers group called Crash Course with a new scenehead called Andy Eastwood. While Mac and I took turns to slag off the name of his group, Wylie invited us to support them at Kirklands.

We agreed. Until the last moment, when Mac was close to shitting out. First he was really late. Then he wouldn't sing, he'd only play melodica. Sod it, man, I'll bloody sing.

We did 'Jefferson Davis', 'Robert Mitchum' and 'Louie Louie'. Mac had on a coat that Mark Smith had given him. My hair was all grown-out rootsy bleached and I had a shit anorak on. I thought I looked way hip. "No way," said Mac. "You look like Justin Hayward." He was right. Uncool.

Mac had a guru called Arrow. Maybe I met him, I can't remember. This guru wrote poems and one poem was called 'A Shallow Madness'. Mac suggested it to me as a new name, so Uh? changed their name and Simmo joined, on the condition that we dumped half the songs. He thought the 'Robert Mitchum'-type stuff sucked shit.

Mac and I thought Simmo was going to be huge. It was in his destiny, his mother said. We heard that all the time. It started to creep into our consciousness and both of us began to believe it. Having Simmo in the group made us feel confident.

Once Mac and I got comfortable together, we'd be dancing and grooving. I thought anything Mac sung was great. I thought any riff I played was

great. Simmo was the voice of reason, he was the big No. He told us what not to play. And it worked.

We all thought that Simmo should play a keyboard of some sort. We looked around for a cheap organ and after sorting through our meagre choices Simmo bought a second-hand Gemini organ for £60 that made everything sound like '96 Tears'.

I showed him the riff to 'Evil Hoodoo' by The Seeds. It's only three notes. Simmo reduced it to two notes, and he and Mac wrote a song straight away. It was easy. Mind you, there were no real words or a chorus, but these things took time.

With Dave Pickett on packing cases and me on distorted guitar, A Shallow Madness rolled into low gear, where we stayed for a while. But we were finally, slowly, moving.

In the incest pool that was Liverpool, there had become a pecking order. Nobody liked it, but nobody complained too much. We were in that pecking order and there we'd stay.

Yet every new group that failed gave its members one less chance in the eyes of everyone else. In Probe, Geoff Davies and John Athey would sarcastically ask the name and line-up of each group that we put together. There were so many combinations, it seemed like I'd played with everyone in Liverpool. Yet I'd still made hardly a sound.

At the very least, Big in Japan were a real going somewhere group. I'd watch them with such jealousy, I couldn't stand what they had become, but it was such entertaining bullshit. I admired Bill Drummond a great deal and still had a thing for Jayne Casey's ass. Of course, I couldn't tell Simmo or Mac about this, I felt bad enough about it without telling my arbiters of cool.

Then one day, as I walked home down Prospect Vale, I was verbally accosted by the most cartoon woman I had ever met. I was only about 200 yards from our bedsit when this fat bleached-blonde beehive woman screeched at me, a banshee wail so piercing that she reminded me of the Mrs Cutout character from Monty Python. "Have you seen our David?" she cooed.

I said that I hadn't.

"Oh, he's up at the Empire, he's been to see the Boomtown Rats."

Ah, I thought. She'll be thinking I'm one of those punk rockers. The conversation dwindled. I never got closer to her than 20 yards, so I walked home convinced that the wail was her only method of speaking.

Then, about three days later, I got to meet "our David". He was 16, carried an armful of punk 45s and was short and fat in the same cartoony way as his mother.

"I've just bought The Adverts' album." He talked in a delicate nervous boy's tone, so I withheld my opinion of The Adverts.

"Yeah? I've just come back from seeing Pere Ubu."

Our David looked sweetly and uncomprehendingly at me. I found out later that he was making his first tentative steps towards cool music and some kind of hip quotient. Everyone at school hated him. His parents were divorced, so they each gave him money to assuage their guilt. He seemed pretty aware of his own shortcomings and I took him under my wing. It was like writing in a brand new book. I schooled our David in the way I would have wished to learn. I made him lists of stuff to buy and I lent him my records, on pain of death if they were not looked after. In fact, I felt stupid about the last proviso - when I got to see his stereo, it was about 500% better than my hairdryer-with-a-speaker.

In a few weeks, I had created a monster. He had all The Doors' albums, the Residents, the Velvet Underground, The Seeds, The 13th Floor Elevators, Pere Ubu, Suicide, Patti Smith, The Mothers of Invention, Television, Love, Captain Beefheart, on and on and on. I flipped out. Suddenly, I had a record library in my street. Our David the librarian even had more Doors records than me. And mostly still shrink-wrapped. Each LP that I had lovingly searched out over the years, then paid virtually nothing for, he had bought brand new.

He would walk into our flat and say, "What's this you're playing?" "Oh, it's 'Mother Sky' by Can. You lent me it yesterday."

All my friends would slag him off. But he was so slaggable, I didn't see the need. I dug the little kid. Every time I played him something, his face would glow. He genuinely loved this stuff and if we couldn't like him, he would be a lost soul.

Wylie, he of the barbed tongue, immediately nicknamed him Yorkie, after the chocolate bar commercial. "Because he's good, rich and thick." And Yorkie he became.

And in the great scheme of things, Yorkie became our means of progress. His mother let us use their cellar in Prospect Vale. She charged us £1.50 per week and made us tea and toast. When we were totally skint, Yorkie would give his mother the money. Of course, we had to call her Gladys, a name I'd always had a problem saying without laughing, but Gladys Palmer was a sweet and crazy woman.

The chance meeting with Gladys and Yorkie put us, suddenly, way ahead. We had a basement. We could set up the equipment and leave it set up. It was June 1978 and our attention span was getting longer.

Then one evening I switched the TV on. *Granada Reports*, our northern magazine guide, started. Tony Wilson, the presenter, started to introduce this new group. I looked up and recognised them as Warsaw, a bunch who had played Eric's a million times and would never get better.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Joy Division."

I watched them. Casually, at first, as a name change usually meant sod all. Then I noticed something. They were good. I mean really good. The song, 'Shadowplay', was raw as hell, but in a dangerous and suppressed way. They had layered solarised film over the group's performance. It was an event.

Of all the groups, Warsaw seemed to me the unlikeliest. The only guy who'd even tried to champion them in the past was Will Sargeant. Every so often, he'd walk up to me during a Warsaw set and say, "Have a look at this. They're getting good." Then I'd saunter in, listen to their new Pere Ubu-bass sound, agree in principle and walk out.

It seemed like Will was right. The next day, Liverpool was buzzing. Joy Division, in one TV performance, had become a force. Also, Tony Wilson had signed them to his new Factory record label. I told Yorkie to buy everything so far released on Factory and we checked it all out.

I started to call him Yorkshire. It had more dignity and helped when others were mean to him. Mac hated him. He was quite willing to use Yorkie's situation but Mac never had any desire to turn people on to music. He had bad hang ups like that: if he was into something good, he'd keep it completely to himself. But if anyone was into something before him, he had to hate it.

I remember one conversation clearly. Mac said he was into the Velvet Underground in 1972. I said I thought I'd bought mine around the same time. It was the double-album compilation with the Andy Warhol coke bottles on the sleeve. I had bought it for £1.25 in Torquay, along with a Litter LP for 25p and a shit blues album by Zephyr, also for 25p. Then I thought, No, no, if it was Torquay, it must have been 1973. Yeah, I was 15 and I was working in a hotel.

Mac roared, "1973! Bloody 'ell." I'd never seen anyone so pleased with their one-upmanship in my life. It was almost worth losing just to see him so happy. Heaven help Yorkie, who'd just last week bought the entire Velvets' catalogue.

The middle of June, we saw a group called Dalek I Love You. They played Eric's one night with sofas and lamps on stage, and their set was a weird combination of uncool and brilliant. Like the guitarist had a moustache. Uncool. And the bass player was a total sissy, with a lisp and cutesy fringe. But they had organ lines, like The Seeds, and Doorsy bass lines. The bullshit on stage didn't work, but along with the psychedelic guitar and Suicide drum-machine, it all helped to create their own thing.

Back at rehearsals, their performance caused uproar. Mac was very late and the rest of us got talking about Dalek I Love You. When he arrived, Mac refused to even mention their name.

Simmo and I decided to bait him. We'd asked Pete Wylie's young mate Mick Finkler to try out on guitar, as I felt more comfortable on bass. Mick

had the same reservations as us, but admired what Dalek were trying to do.

Mac got a cob on, the Scouse equivalent of "totally pissed off", and went home. The four of us - Dave Pickett, Mick Finkler, Simmo and I - all raged on about his attitude. And he was bloody late all the time. And he'd stopped coming up with stuff. And Mick Finkler was playing real cool chords and we'd done shitloads with him, until Mac had arrived.

It all welled up, the frustration at getting nowhere, the pettiness of trying to be cool all the time. Shit, man, we were getting so cool we weren't allowed to do anything. Who gave a shit, anyway? Have you seen The Pop Group? They're the coolest fucking uncoolest band in the world. Even Warsaw have got good. So, let's Go!!!!

Big in Japan split up. We were all sad now. They'd been really good in their own way. Still, they were all back in the fold.

Dave Balfe, the wimpy bass player from Dalek I Love You, had joined Big in Japan just before they split up. We all hated him because he'd shagged his way into the Liverpool scene and exaggerated his lisp in front of women. He had had every good-looking woman we knew. It was alright for Wylie to do that, but Balfe was an ugly plank. He and Bill Drummond were starting a record label. I thought that was a shame, as I'd wanted to do something with Bill. They were releasing a Big in Japan "farewell" record. What a drag. I hated Balfe. Even Jayne Casey nicknamed him "Smurf ", and she was shagging him.

Meanwhile, rehearsals ground on and on. We'd write music while we waited for Mac, then Mac would hate it. Then he'd go off to see Smelly Elly's sister. It was a first affair thing for him, so I understood.

But we were not so close any more. I was now 20, long away from home, living with a woman and getting snottier. Mac was living with his mother, 18 years old, preoccupied with getting laid all the time I'd known him. Man, were we out of synch.

I wanted the group now. I told everyone. I got heavy and said I would sing if McCull didn't get his shit together. They said I couldn't sing. I couldn't. Not a note. *And* I thought I was Sky Saxon. *And* the guy out of Pere Ubu. I

didn't care. Mark Smith couldn't sing. Patti Smith couldn't sing. There was a long tradition of us.

I loved Mac. It did my head in to do it. It was my first guilt trip. I could tell Mac wasn't happy. He wanted a rock group and we were too stumbling. I didn't want it to end our friendship and I thought it wouldn't.

It was the end of A Shallow Madness. I asked Mac to leave so he kind of took the name with him. Rehearsals were weird. We had no name and no singer. I had to try now, as I'd kicked up such a fuss. I just hoped I wasn't as shit as everyone thought.

IT'S JUST LIKE SLEEPING GAS

Dave Pickett was a crap drummer. We loved him dearly, but it had to be said and I had to say it. It was the middle of August and he wasn't getting better. We told him the group was going nowhere and split up.

That week, Paul Simpson and I were looking for group names. We'd keep a name about a day and get bored. We were The Soul Giants for about four hours, but it soon sounded crap. By September, Mick and I were round at Simmo's every day. We needed a drummer and a name. Then Simmo got his comics out.

There was this story, in a *Super D.C.* comic, about a battle in Central Park, involving Namur, the undersea god, and the superhero, Daredevil. The whole story comes to a climax as the sun blots out and suddenly, for no reason at all, the Teardrop Explodes.

It made no sense, the story made no sense at all. We tried to figure it out and we couldn't. But it was a great name for a group. I loved it. It was like The 13th Floor Elevators or The Chocolate Watchband. And no-one had a name like that. September '78 was all short dour names. Ours was far-fucking-out.

That night, at Eric's, I asked Gary Dwyer to join our group. He was a big mate of Pete Wylie and he had talked about learning to play drums. Gary modelled himself on Rocky. He was 6'5", with dyed black hair and an enormous black coat.

In the deafening roar of Eric's bar, Gary said, "What are yer called?" When he heard the name, he looked down at me and said, "You've gotta weird one there, Julian."

He was right. And it looked like we might have a cool one, too. Gary brought a drum-kit down that his auntie had inherited. So we now had a real kit. And Gary could play this rhythm that Budgie had taught him.

Simmo, Mick and I had been worried about asking Gary. He knew absolute shit about music, but we were desperate. It turned out to be the best thing

we could have done. Gary worked us really hard. He got good in about four weeks and asked us when the first gigs were.

Gigs? It's only October. Gary said we needed to play live or we'd never get better. I couldn't believe what he was saying. He'd only started playing drums in September. No way would we be ready this year. I was scared shitless. Sure, it sounded good. But only in comparison with how crap we'd been in August. I shuddered at the thought of playing on stage. This was our last real chance. I was convinced we had to do it right.

We had written a couple of songs by this time. One was called 'Camera Camera', built around this one skinny cyclical riff. It needed a refrain at the end of each verse, so we tried to copy the chorus at the end of The Doors' 'Wintertime Love'. Simmo and I wrote some pop-art images down and I intoned them over the song.

Next, we wrote 'Sleeping Gas'. It started with my bass riff, which I had ripped off from 'Ain't It Strange' by Patti Smith. The song had started from a bass & drums jam one month before between myself and Dave Pickett, who had promptly given the tune a classic post-punk name: 'Sleeping Gas'. Mick played these two spindly chords of D major and B flat, and Simmo just pumped away on two notes. But when Rocky Dwyer heard the song, he tried to put a disco beat to it and it became this low-grade dance song. We recorded a 45-minute version of 'Sleeping Gas', a whole side of a C90 cassette, with me singing anything, then I took the tape home, worked out what the words were and came back with a finished song. I showed Simmo a D minor chord, which he held down throughout the instrumental passage.

That week, with pressure on from Gary, Candy James got in touch with me. She'd hired Eric's for a party on November 15th. And would we play? Shit, it was three weeks away and we had about four songs. Okay, but we won't be very good. She didn't mind, she said, and that was that.

I rushed to Yorkie's to tell everyone. They flipped out, but we had to do it. We just had to go out there and be judged. It was easier at a party, but all the regulars would be there. Oh, well.

Mac and I still hung around all the time. He felt left out when we were rehearsing, but the friendship was stronger than that. Then one day we

were all in the upstairs bar at Kirklands. Will Sargeant was pissed off, as Simmo's preoccupation with the Teardrops had meant the end of Industrial / Domestic. He and Mac got talking, a conversation I never heard, and a pretty low-key one I'd imagine, as they were the two most emotionally autistic guys I'd ever met. All they had in common was rejection by us lot. I knew it was hard on both of them, but my hang ups couldn't stop us this time. They started playing together and that eased our guilt.

The end of October came and we had two weeks to be ready. Shit, my singing was the worst. If we'd never known Mac's voice, maybe it would have been better. Keep trying, keep trying.

The set was now 'Sleeping Gas', 'Camera Camera', 'I've Read It in Books', my old Stooges rip-off 'Stammheim', a terrible slow McCulloch / Simpson thing called 'There Go the 70s' and a song called 'Seeing Through You'. It lasted about 30 minutes if we droned the fuck out of everything and 15 minutes if we didn't.

Then Mac told me that he and Will were getting places. They had jammed for hours along with Will's drum-machine. One night at Eric's, Geoff Lovestone, AKA Les Pattinson, told Simmo and me that he had a bass. He'd bought it for £30 and had written a bass line. He was scared to ask, but he wanted to join Mac and Will. We said he should ask them, they could support us in a week's time.

Les joined and Smelly Elly suggested names like Mona Lisa & the Grease Guns, the Daz-men, and Echo & the Bunnymen. They opted for the latter and the November 15th show was scheduled.

I had mixed feelings about the name. I wanted us to be the only group with a long psychedelic title. They never would have dared if we hadn't gone first. Still, Echo & the Bunnymen was a brilliant name, and Will was also a big 13th Floor Elevators head, and we still felt guilty, so who cared? We'd be a bigger force with both groups.

At Yorkie's basement we learned 'Evil Hoodoo' by The Seeds and wrote an instrumental thing for the start of the set. We had a few days left, so we sat around and tried not to shit ourselves.

Kathy found us a flat in Devonshire Road, in Liverpool 8. Wylie lived there and so did Hilary. It seemed like the place to be.

We had the seven-room top-floor of a Georgian house. It was £15 per week. I told the dole that I lived with our friends Ally and Chris, and left some clothes and stuff at their house to make it look convincing. The DHSS believed us and so we could afford the flat.

Les Pattinson brought his van and he, Yorkie and Simmo helped us move. We couldn't afford a bed, so we nicked the one from our bedsit. We had to leave something in its place, so Yorkie and I searched around. We found a double mattress on a skip and dragged it back to the bedsit. It was damp and filthy. It fitted perfectly into its surroundings.

NEED A VOICE

We sat in the Eric's dressing room, being cool. It felt weird. Eric's was home, but the dressing room? It didn't feel right. Only I had been in there before and then I'd scurried out as soon as I could.

Wylie came in, beaming and yelling that it was going to be great. All my friends from college were at the party and our hip, hip Eric's mates were waiting to judge us.

The Bunnymen had one song, built around Les's bass-riff. It was time for them to go on. Mac didn't want to, yet. The time passed and they had to go.

Will walked on stage and switched the drum-machine on. It started its insistent surf Suicide-y hiss and Les came in with his simple dum-dum-der, dum-dum-der-der-der bass. Will's full-on echoed one-note guitar followed and the almost-blind Ian McCulloch took up his stance at the mike. He did not sing.

Mac's sister, Julie, noticed that he was sweating so she passed him a Kleenex from the front row. Mac thought someone was attacking him and stepped back, quickly. Then he started his low repeated vocal, squinting into the darkness ...

As they walked offstage, I rushed up to them. "That was totally brilliant. Shit, it was legendary." I was given to outbursts like that, in those days, but I really meant it. They were so simple. They played four notes, no chords, just four notes in the entire song. Man, I was jealous. If only I had a voice. Shit.

I don't much remember our set. It was good and people dug it, but mainly I just thought, The Bunnymen are brilliant and we're a real group at last. Simmo copped out of doing 'Evil Hoodoo' and we shortened 'Stammheim', as it was sounding like crap.

We arranged another gig one week later, again at Eric's. Roger Eagle said nothing about the music. I figured he hated us, but he put us on again, so I guess it was okay.

The Bunnymen went into songwriting mode and put off playing live for a while. We wrote two more songs for the next week's gig and I met Dave Balfe in Mathew Street. He'd heard that we were pretty good and said that he and Bill might want to record us. Hmm. I wasn't into Balfe. And we could hardly play. Gary had been drumming for nine weeks. My voice was shit. We didn't have enough songs. Etc., etc.

I kept up the excuses until after the next show. Bill said he wanted to do a single. He had time booked for December 6th. I wasn't sure and we'd been kicked out of Yorkie's while he sound-proofed the place. Bill said we could rehearse in the basement of Penny's cafe, where he worked. That way, he could hassle us.

Okay. It was a tentative okay, but my ego was all fired up. We would be recording our first ep after only 11 weeks together. That appealed to me.

We moved into Penny's damp basement and worked as hard as we could. Bill Drummond came down with tea and advice every hour or so. We all thought 'Sleeping Gas' was a classic and Bill wanted it as lead track. We also wanted 'Camera Camera' for definite and a song called 'Seeing Through You'.

Dave Balfe came down to the basement. He wanted to check out our stuff. I told him to sod off and keep out of our affairs. I didn't like him and I didn't trust him. The Big in Japan ep had been re-pressed in secret. The rest of Big in Japan were all totally pissed off.

December 6th arrived. Yorkie and Les Pattinson helped us move our equipment up to the studio. It was a tiny four-track, above the cafe. We set up and played through the songs.

Without the cavernous reverb of the basement and Eric's, everything sounded so flat and weak that I got pissed off. Balfe said he was the producer. I told him to fuck off. We were producing it. "You're just the engineer, Balfe," I told him.

I insisted that he put loads more bass into the sound and reverb all over the vocals. He did that, then changed it back while I was playing the backing tracks. We played everything live and then I was to re-record the lead vocals.

'Sleeping Gas' sounded perfect. I insisted that we keep the first take. Balfe said it was shit. No way, I thought it was the best thing ever. I went into the studio and fell asleep on top of the drum booth. In the other room, Dave Balfe turned purple. Bill Drummond and the rest of the group just sat there. Finally, Balfe came in and said that he was paying for it, so do the bloody thing again. He was paying. I said nothing, then, "Okay Balfe, you fucking bread-head. We'll do it again. But you're a twat."

We piled back in the studio and did another take of 'Sleeping Gas'. Balfe was right. It sounded 10 times better. I acted as though it was my idea, to piss him off, then we recorded 'Camera Camera' and 'Seeing Through You' in a couple of takes.

I was nervous about recording the vocals, so everyone cleared out of the studio for a while. I sung my ass off, all the songs, really quickly and no mistakes. Everybody came back in and listened. Gary thought we should try another singer. Mick and Simmo were polite as they told me it sucked shit. Balfe said it was as good as I'd get, I just couldn't sing.

We had to get an ep out of the session, as Bill and Balfe had paid £35, which was their budget. We decided we could live with everything but 'Seeing Through You'. It was pathetic, weak and out of tune. We had an hour left, so we recorded one of Simmo's dreary instrumentals in as long as it took to play it.

We had three tracks for the ep. They were in tune and not speeded up too much. I hoped that everyone was deaf and couldn't hear the vocals.

Balfe asked his mate Alan Gill from Dalek I Love You to do the record sleeve. We wanted it to look like *The Savoy Session* with a piano drawing on the front. The rest of the group wanted photos on the back, but I wanted total enigma. Mick Finkler was only 17. He wanted a photo as proof to his mates. So did Gary. Oh, well. My photo was taken so far away that it could have been anyone.

You know, your first record, it's the most special. I wanted it to do well, look great and be legendary.

The group was exhausting me. I wasn't used to work. Kathy and I went to my parents in Tamworth, where we spent a long pork-out Christmas. I told

my mother the name of my group. She gave me her best withering look and said, "Oh, you'll get a long way with that name."

OF PENNY LANE AND PIES ON THE FLOOR

Jamie Farrell, 17, lay back in the armchair, checking every inch of the *Sleeping Gas* ep. He took the record out of its sleeve and examined the Zoo label for the hundredth time.

"It is, though, isn't it? I mean, you can't count Big in Japan. This is the first one, 'cause it's you lot ... and you lot are our lot. Know what I mean?" Everyone in the room knew exactly what Jamie meant. There was a pride about the brand newness of the record. And even if they were not yet in a group, many of them felt that this was proof that they all could do it. The camaraderie was becoming very intense.

In December, Pete Wylie, Mick Finkler, Ian McCulloch and Gary Dwyer had all moved in together. Their flat, in Penny Lane, had become the central hang-out scene.

The place was a madhouse. Wylie was the shag-monster of Liverpool and had a new woman every day. Jamie would be there, along with Tempo and Kevin the Drunk. Tempo was a great-looking rocker from Keighley whom everyone loved and Wylie idolised. His real name was Steve Tempest and Wylie was forever trying to form a band around him. And every night Kevin the Drunk would fall out of the second-floor window, landing in the awning of the Polish grocer who lived underneath. The grocer would freak and Bill Drummond, who lived about 200 yards away, could hear the chaos from his own home.

They lived on chicken pies and beer. One time, I heard a crash and Wylie rushed in. Gary had dropped all the pies on the floor. We went in to help him clear up, only to find Gary eating off the disgusting floor.

As the only Hebrew member of the scene, Mick Finkler was christened Kid Bagel by Wylie. At that time, all the younger guys adored Wylie; he could do no wrong. Pete was on his Jim Morrison trip. Full leather outfit and hair grown out. Even with our groups, Mac and I were still hung up about the "power of Wylie". If ever I got too worried, Mac would dismiss my fears with a shrug: "Ay, don't worry about Wylie. He's just a dough-head."

Early February 1979, I walked down Rodney Street towards Paul Simpson's flat. The normally stiff and ultra-cool Simmo was hanging out of the window, waiting for me. He waved a newspaper and as I got closer, I heard him yelling, "Single-of-the-week, single-of-the-week!"

I rushed into the flat, where he had laid out *Sounds* and *NME*. We were in! We were good! They liked us! And Giovanni Dadomo, a guy I quite trusted, had said things I only dreamed about:

> "Absurdly basic, thoroughly hypnotic, stripped to a minimum rock'n'roll. 'Sleeping Gas' is the killer; sturdy, danceable as disco, reggae, 'Louie Louie' or '96 Tears', and sounding like nothing else I've heard."

'96 Tears'. I could not believe it.

We all walked around with swell-heads, being dead modest and faking surprise. We'd played two gigs and had single of the week. All-fucking-right.

We walked down to see Bill in the cafe. He was smiling his head off. "Tony Wilson's been on the phone. He wants you to do 'What's On' this week. He's been ringing Eagle all day, but I only just found out."

Shit, we were getting to play on TV. My head spun. I was still shocked at being in a group, and now all this.

Granada Studios were 30 miles away in Manchester. Dave Balfe drove us, with Bill in the front seat. Piled in the back was the group, Wylie, Jamie, Mac, Dave Pickett and the equipment. Yorkie wanted to come, but meanness precluded it.

We partied down the motorway and hit Manchester with a real attitude. Fuck everyone, Liverpool is the music scene. Our record meant one thing to everyone in the van: anyone can play.

It was ironic that the four group members were the worst musicians there. Except for Mac, who was equally inept. It was the start of a dangerous

trend. I mean, Jamie and Wylie could play solos. They felt a pressure to go off and de-learn everything.

At the studios, we were shown around the *Coronation Street* set. Wylie and I were addicts and we nicked shitloads. Then coming through the gates was the legendary Eddie Yates, the greatest character on the programme. Wylie ran towards him, screaming, "Eddie, you're a god!", then he fell on his knees before the great man. Edward the Bemused cast his eyes towards the rest of us and smiled. Yes.

In the studio, Dave Balfe spluttered and argued with technicians, as the amps and drums took the stage. We occupied our time by writing "Fuck" almost invisibly on all the Granada TV logos that were used between programmes.

Eventually they were ready and we ran through the song. We'd decided on 'Camera Camera' as it didn't need reverb or too much of an atmosphere. There was no recording. It went out live. We waited and we waited. We all shit ourselves. Then we were on. "... a new group from Liverpool. Please welcome The Teardrop Explodes."

Outside Probe Records, young kids came up to us. They asked Simmo if he was in The Teardrop Explodes. He signed an autograph and they walked off happy. Hmm, I was maybe a little anonymous for a lead singer.

That night, with TV still coursing through our veins, we supported Wire at Eric's. Roger Eagle gave us £5 for expenses, with a curt "You're not on TV now."

The Teardrop Explodes' entourage began its inevitable drift around the north. I felt like we were enormous already, but according to Balfe there were other places to conquer.

We played Manchester's Band on the Wall club on Mark Smith's 23rd birthday. It was strange to be on stage with him in the audience. I still felt that I had loads to prove to him, especially as Mac had got a name-check on the B-side of the new Fall single.

Wylie sat in front of the drum-kit to prevent it moving forwards. John the Postman ranted throughout the show: "Brill, more, louder, lou-der!"

Members of the Manchester scene were there to check us out.

The whole set was held together with attitude. We were shit. Bill and Balfe wanted us to get tight. To us, tight still meant starting and stopping together. We played Leeds and York, and Mac came with us at all times. It was like still having him in the group.

The Bunnymen had recorded a dreadful version of 'Monkeys' for a Liverpool compilation, featuring all the old guard of "fun groups" and hippy bullshit. Luckily for us, our track, 'The Tunnel', was erased by the dickhead engineer. He recorded The Naughty Lumps, a student-punk group, over our song by mistake. The Bunnymen had no such luck, so it had to come out.

It made no difference, really. The Bunnymen were beginning to sound great. Bill and Balfe recorded their single in March. The A-side, 'The Pictures on My Wall', had a beautiful "troika-chase" majesty about it. Their version of 'I've Read It in Books' was on the B-side. Simmo and Bill added backing vocals and hand-claps. It was a lot straighter than our record. Much poppier and very melodic. But I was jealous as hell of Mac's voice. Even though it was Bowie-ish, it sounded so rich and ominous. Also, the drum-machine made them 10 times tighter than Gary's lumpy drums and my ragged bass.

'The Pictures on My Wall' was released on May 5th, Mac's 20th birthday. It got brilliant reviews and was also single of the week. We started to play shows together. That way, we could appear bigger than we were. We alternated headline and support every night, and the crowds started to get bigger and bigger.

The first 5,000 run of the *Sleeping Gas* ep all sold out and Bill and Balfe pressed up another 5,000 in late May.

In late spring Paul Simpson decided to leave. He wanted a show of his own and couldn't see me giving him enough room as the Teardrop became better. He was right. I'd begun to control the direction and kept everyone on a tight rein.

We had shows all the time and Dave Balfe said he wanted to play organ. Mick and I were reluctant as hell, but I had to admit that Balfe was good.

He learned Simmo's two-note parts in half an hour and made us rehearse songs over and over. We still hated him, though. He was uncool as hell and rude to boot.

In early June, the second 45 was recorded. We went into an eight-track, at Amazon in north Liverpool. We wouldn't let Balfe play, so I did the organ on 'Bouncing Babies' and Gary and Mick played organ and atonal piano on the B-side, a horrible song called 'All I Am Is Loving You'.

Simmo had bought a copy of *Nite Flights* by The Walker Brothers for £1. Their music was incredibly inspiring. On two of the songs, Scott and John Walker sung these beautiful weird harmonies over a backdrop of atonal piano and a motorik Doors-y beat. So we tried to make 'All I Am Is Loving You' sound sad and wistful, like Scott Walker singing in purgatory, but my voice was particularly off that day and the whole thing was a resounding failure. The three of us admitted it to ourselves, but of course in public we said it was brilliant.

Kathy and I were happy at 20 Devonshire Road. We went to the rent tribunal and they reduced the rent to £12.50 per week. I got a royalty cheque for £33 from sales of *Sleeping Gas* and we bought a carpet for the bedroom.

I got a name-check on The Fall album in a song called 'Two-Steps Back'. The lyric was a reference to magic mushrooms:

> "Julian said, how was the gear?
>
> They don't sell things to you over here."

I was pleased as hell, but I was very anti-drugs at that time and could never remember any such conversation.

New groups were appearing in Liverpool. Andy McCluskey, a hippy we all called "Leo Sayer", had formed a group called, get this, Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark. It seemed like everyone was jumping on the long-name bandwagon. I'd seen Andy McCluskey in a group called

Pegasus. They'd done a bunch of heepy toons, then he introduced the "most important song of the decade" and they played 'Anarchy in the UK'. Gary said they had two hopes of getting anywhere: Bob Hope and no hope. We were on Zoo Records and fuck everyone else.

Lyn and Peter Burns had moved in to 20 Devonshire. They had the ground floor flat. Sandwiched between us was an old couple and their son, Dave the Moron. He'd play ELO at anytime of day, so I retaliated by playing my ancient harmonium at 2 a.m. The old couple's bedroom was under my music room and I'd pedal like crazy and sellotape all the white notes down.

Kathy had some time off in August, so we got married. I don't know why, we just did. Actually, I do know my main reasons. Frank Zappa and Marc Bolan were both married at 21. It seemed like a cool thing to do. Most of the Liverpool scene were gay or promiscuous as hell. Being married seemed like the most non-conformist thing that we could do and I was always a man of great gestures.

Dave Balfe said I was a stupid twat and it would never last. He kept on and on at me until one day I said to him, "Balfe, she's only my first wife." Yeah.

YMCA

And so, in early July, our second record was released to hip, cool reviews and a second single of the week. 'Bouncing Babies' was a great song, but a very average record. I'd had the riff since late '77, but when I fell in love with The Pop Group's 'She Is Beyond Good & Evil', I ripped off its staccato rhythm completely.

If I heard a good riff, I'd use it in our songs. Sometimes, I'd take two bars of a song and repeat it over and over. Then I'd add my lyrics and melody. I'd write down every interesting comment or idea that I heard and give the person six months to use it. After that, I'd figure it was public domain and work it into my own songs.

After a while, I started cannibalising all of our stuff. Now I was obsessed by 'Louie Louie' and the dance-beat. If you listen to the music of The Doors and The Seeds, they use the same riffs and rhythms over and over. As my voice was still horribly weak, I would concentrate on repetitious lyrics. Insistent, always insistent.

The Teardrop and the Bunnymen were playing all over the north. The Zoo package was hip shit and we got good quickly. Neither group could bear to support and the Bunnymen were so miserable all the time that I used to psyche them out. When it was our turn to support, I'd walk into places and say, "Dump City, Bill. Bagsy we're on first." It didn't work often, but it wound them up just enough.

Of course, after one week in the band, Dave Balfe had started acting like the leader. He gave us such shit in rehearsal that we kicked him out. Ged Quinn, a sweet weirdo with a Tom Waits fixation, joined us for five gigs but Balfe was driving us to the shows and told us Ged sucked. Bill Drummond agreed so Balfe rejoined with, ha ha, promises to back off.

Then, out of the blue, The Teardrop Explodes got their first front cover. We went out to buy a copy of *Sounds* and there were Mick Finkler and me on the front. We couldn't believe it. A journalist called Dave McCulloch had done a little interview and a month later we were on the front. It made a huge difference. The guy was a plank, but he had good intentions and

made us sound important. He turned on the people who'd dismissed us as bleak northerners.

We'd play the Factory in Manchester all the time. There'd be weird shitty new-wave support groups. One time, A Certain Ratio supported us. They were just these four little guys, three with guitars and one with a noise machine. They were crap, but unusual...

Then Kevin Millins rang us up. He ran Final Solution, the major alternative promoter, and wanted to do a big gig at the YMCA in Tottenham Court Road.

Bill Drummond had kept us away from London. He didn't want us playing shitty pubs. We weren't ready, anyway. But this seemed like a good idea. Final Solution picked weird places and then decorated them, and they were always the place to be. Besides, Joy Division were playing. I loved them. Let's do it.

The Bunnymen drove all the equipment down in Les's van and we all piled into Balfe's car. He had use of his father's Citroen, which made us all resentful as hell.

We arrived at the Y-Club mid-afternoon. It was the entire basement of the YMCA and the stage looked huge. I really didn't know London at all. We wrote London groups off as lame fashionaries. All that Mod stuff sucked shit. It was the time of The Jam and parkas and weasel-faced Paul Weller copyists.

We saw Joy Division rehearsing. They sounded Godlike. I'd lent Peter Hook my bass amp at Eric's two months before and I couldn't work out how he got that roar. We sunk into the background for the rest of the afternoon and just got into being in London.

Essential Logic, this London free-jazz thing, were headlining. Joy Division were second on the bill, then us, then the Bunnymen. Mac was nervous as hell, but that gave him an edge and made him snottier. They were all pissed off at our being above them on the bill and aimed to blow us offstage. At the end of a song called 'Happy Death Men', Mac sang:

> "Neil Young never sounded like this,

The Velvet Underground never sounded like this."

I thought they were pretty crap platitudes to be singing last on the bill. But, you know, it was the right thing to do. You always remember that kind of shit.

Just before we went on, Balfe told us to be brilliant. Of course we'll be brilliant, you plank. I told him not to mouth the words as he played keyboards. He had a tendency to do that shit and it looked crap.

We walked on and opened with a song called 'Second Head'. Mac and Mick Finkler shared a bedroom in Penny Lane. One night, Mac was woken by a sleeping Finkler shouting, "How's your second head? Oh, very good, very good," over and over.

The song was built round this sinewy bass line and tonight it sounded brilliant. We pounded along. It was just a great gig. I was wearing these weird three-quarter-length camo pants and had bare feet. The London audience had caught on to northern grey and I wanted to look different. Even Balfe was happy. I introduced 'I've Read It in Books': "This is a cover of an Echo & the Bunnymen song. Only ours is fab and better."

Then we finished with a totally psychotic 'Sleeping Gas'. That song just had the most Germanic disco-beat. I'd start goofing on the vocals and Balfe would fade in waves of noise from this little synthesizer we'd just got. We built the song up and up, then bam, we walked off the stage to cheers, Balfe's spluttering white-noise repeating and repeating. It was cool.

After that, we just hung out. Joy Division weren't the total all-out assault that they could be, but they were pretty damn good. Later that night, I bumped into their singer, Ian Curtis, and said he had a cool group. He had this deep sad Iggy Pop lament quality when he sang, but he spoke in the most gentle high-pitched Manchester accent. I couldn't reconcile two such different characters in one man. But he was a nice guy and he was doing his extremely cool thing.

Back in Liverpool, the reviews began to come in. They all said the same thing. The groups were all "unorthodox, but rarely inaccessible" and our songs "suggest something more sinister and disorientating underneath". Awlright! At last people could see northern music as more than grey coats and long faces.

Late summer, Bill got us a publishing deal with Warner Bros. It was enough for both groups to get a weekly wage. We were professional musicians now, so we swanned around Liverpool and told everybody, real casual like.

Uh, Look Out!

PRESSURE ON

And then it happened. Seymour Stein at Sire Records wanted to sign Echo & the Bunnymen. We went into the Zoo office in Whitechapel and the place was just going crazy. I was still reeling from our publishing deal. The Bunnymen on a major? What about us? That's all I thought. What about us?

Bill Drummond told me it was time to do something about my role as leader. Apparently I still moved and looked crap onstage. He said that Mac's look had interested Seymour Stein.

I was outraged. Totally freaked out. Balfe and Bill had no answers for me. I was blind and running, looking for excuses. Why was I no good? Why didn't I move? Oh shit!

Bill humoured me with the best wind-up of all: "Julian, the Bunnymen need Mac's lips. But when you make it, it's just gonna have to be the music that does it."

Oh thanks, Bill. Thanks a fucking lot. In my mind, I saw them, all my so-called friends. They were tiny, standing on a mantelpiece. I raised my arm up to one end and brushed the lot into oblivion.

I felt bad. I knew what I was. I was one of those ugly snob musicians who want to be recognised on their musical merit alone. You always want people to ignore your looks if you look crap. "Just take me for my music."

I'd fallen for real basic bullshit. I'd de-glamorised myself to the point where even my wife told me to look more like Paul Simpson or Les Pattinson. During the previous two years, I had looked alternately great or shit. But always good. Now I was becoming Bad Head Personified.

I spun around in a bewildered haze for a few weeks. Of the Bunnymen, only Mac was outright mean. I guessed that his real feelings were finally coming out, now he was on the verge of trashing me.

Devonshire Road was a sanctuary for a bloody long while. I couldn't think straight. I consoled myself in simple ways. Like the fact that the Bunnymen had to get a drummer to please their record company. Huh, cop

out. Like the fact that Mac considered me enough of a rival to have to get back at me by swanning around in a new coat. And me, the one who introduced them to Zoo, always hoping the Bunnymen would do well. I was a saint and they didn't even notice. Huh.

I wallowed in self-pity and equally bullshitting thoughts for quite some time. Of course, it made no real difference in the near future. We were bigger and better than Echo & the Bunnydroppings any day of the week.

Mac used to call Simmo "Joe Bowie" in an effort to deflect the Thin White Duke comparisons away from himself. Have you heard the Bunnymen's new Peel session? Uncool. Not even a good Bowie rip-off, more like Mick Ronson, if you ask me.

I was filled with vitriol. A man possessed. Kathy suggested I change my look. I'd kind of become rigidly asexual. Kathy was never crazy about my looks and gradually it began to erode my confidence. If your partner is always telling you to try to look more like your close friend, it whittles away at your confidence. I loved Paul Simpson, but I never wanted to look like him. I dug his Fascist Bum-boy look, but I could live without it on me.

Balfe and Bill were down to earth at least. They told me that we'd get a deal, just forget the glamour, Julian, some of us aren't meant for it. Yeah, it's bullshit in any case. Who wants to be glamorous?

And so the fire raged on into the autumn of 1979. There were more groups like us every day. Paul Morley had coined the phrase "post-punk" to describe our kind of music.

The Teardrop and Bunnymen both played together at the Leeds Futurama festival. It was hell on earth. The groups were all hippy bullshitters with long coats on. And dickheads with a single straggly plait at the back of their ugly scrubland hairstyles. A group called The Monochrome Set came on and did some terribly English songs, with white suits and an early progressive rock stance. Fuck right off.

With pressure on, Mick Finkler and I wrote a great song. It was called 'Treason', and it was about rivalry and freaking out. It had the best chorus I had yet written and we said it was a hit.

Bill thought it was great. He rang his old friend, Clive Langer, who was now a big producer with Madness. Clive came up and thought we were crap. He humoured us for a while, but Gary put pressure on him. Gary had been a maniac for Deaf School, Clive's old group. He told Clive how much it would mean to him, and Clive just felt bad and said, "Okay."

As the Bunnymen signed to Sire, The Teardrop Explodes drove down to London to record their third single. It was our first 24-track session. We had a day to record 'Treason' and the B-side, which was our version of 'I've Read It in Books'.

The studio was below a launderette. We piled in and played the backing tracks over and over. It was lifeless, and Gary and I kept slowing down, speeding up, losing our place in the song, all this miserable stuff. Then, on the 23rd take, Clive said, "Yeah, I think that's the one. Come in and listen."

We went in. It was just bass and drums. Clive had taken my guide vocals and Mick's guitar out to check the rhythm track. I thought it was rubbish. How could he tell, with the bass and drums exposed like that? Better trust him.

We added all the other music really quickly. I can't remember doing any singing, so it was probably quite traumatic. I have a tendency to bleep out memories that are too much of a drag.

By 3 a.m. we had two sides of a single recorded. We slept overnight in a shit hotel in Sussex Gardens. There were prostitutes outside and the beds were shit. I wasn't used to hotels. We always drove back to Liverpool after gigs, as they were too expensive. I fell asleep with London's prossies echoing in my head. I was still angry at everything. This place sucks shit, get me out of here.

DAVE BALFE, WHAT'S GOT INTO YOU?

And so, whilst we were recording in London, Echo & the Bunnymen auditioned their one choice for drums, a 17 year old called Pete DeFreitas. Dave Balfe knew him. He shared a flat with Balfe's brother in London. I didn't really notice Pete. There were five years between us. I was married and had just turned 22. All that concerned me was Balfe's role in everything anyone did.

He'd insisted that we sign our Warner publishing through Zoo, giving them a cut. Okay, that's cool. Bill would do anything for me, so why not? But then, Balfe wanted to manage us. Sure Balfe, be our management, record company and publishers. You plank. I hated the guy. He wanted to be a full-time member of the Teardrop, but had an allegiance only to himself.

If I had an idea, I'd discuss it with him, get into it, go round to his flat and then ... if he was doing Bunnymen stuff, he'd put the idea on their song. The Bunnymen were always thick like that. They'd complain and moan about Balfe, but never do anything. I'd say, "Why don't you just twat the guy?" but they never would.

One time, we were coming back from a gig in Bristol. Pam Young, a Jenny Agutter-type, had arrived from Sheffield to become Zoo secretary. She was sitting in the back with Mick Finkler and me. Bill was in the front and Balfe was driving. I told her loudly and in great detail what a satanic son-of-a-bitch Balfe was. I started flicking his ears as we drove up the empty M5 and singing petty anti-Balfe rhymes.

After 10 minutes of this, he pulled onto the hard shoulder and told me to get out. This appealed to me. It was coming up to 3 a.m. and we were in the middle of nowhere.

Standing outside the car, I looked in on Balfe. I smiled.

"I'm not fucking coming back," he spluttered.

"Oh, I'd better leave my shoes in the car," I said. The road was wet and there was virtually no traffic.

"I'm going."

"Okay, David." I did a little jig in the middle of the motorway and waved them off. "See you in a while."

I started to walk up the motorway. I should have brought my jacket, I thought. I carried on gingerly. My feet began to freeze, so I took my sodden socks off and held them in my hand.

I figured they'd be back in 10 minutes. I had no watch, so 20 minutes seemed like an hour. I kept walking and walking. It was just like a bad hitch. I was cool. Certainly Nth degrees cooler than Dave "Smurf-features" Balfe.

Still no sign. I sat on a motorway crash barrier and raised my aching red feet in an effort to warm them up. No car, no Balfe. I began to grow uncomfortable. I mean, a twat like that. Maybe Bill couldn't persuade him, but surely Mick could. I mean, Mick hates him almost as much as I do.

Finally, a car screamed by in the opposite direction. It was Balfe's Citroen. Ten minutes later, he had found the nearest intersection, made the turn and roared up to me. I was freezing cold, soaking wet and beaten.

"Hi Balfe, where are you going?"

"Get in, Julian, I'm fucking pissed off as hell. I wouldn't have come back if Bill wasn't in the car."

Bill leaned over from the passenger seat and looked up at me. He told me they'd driven 25 miles before he could persuade Balfe to turn around.

"You know, I'm fine walking, Balfe. If I were you, I'd get off home. This has been quite an evening for you."

I was pushing my luck, I knew it. Any minute now, he'd be off for good. I got in the car, "as a favour to you, Davie," and we drove off on full wind-up power.

And that was the turning-point. From then on, I respected Balfe. He had a good measure of the psychotic in him and I realised how hard it was to be in his position. Of course, I'd use his uncoolness and red-faced rage against him whenever I could. But autumn was the start of the unlikely axis: Julian David Cope and David William Miguel Balfe. Er, Look Out!

The big chill started slowly. I still didn't trust Balfe. But I had, at last, grudgingly admitted to myself that he was good.

I took records and a lyric book around to his flat in Grove Park. He made tea and I played him *Scott 2* by Scott Walker. It was a record made by a total obsessive. Scott sung in an absurd voice, Tony Bennett on Valium. The music was lush and grossly over the top, and depressing as hell. We listened in silence. Side one ended. I turned the record over and played side two. On and on, the dark despairing camp grotesqueness of Scott Walker coagulated the atmosphere. Finally, the record ended.

Dave Balfe was moved. He was sucked in from the start. This was his music. Good God, let's make music like that. He got up and walked to the window. A pissy day in Liverpool presented itself to him and Balfe's mind switched into gear.

After that, we could talk to each other. We weren't any nicer to each other, but we understood, now.

HEY, MAN, THAT'S A FUCKING JOINT

As I walked down into the dressing room of Nottingham's tiniest club, I smelled something weird and looked over at Mick Finkler.

"Hey, man, what's that? It's a fucking joint. That's a fucking hippy joint, you bloody hippy. Fucking hell. I mean, fuck."

Mick ignored me and passed the joint to Balfe. Oh great. So now we're fucking The Grateful Dead or some shit. We might as well forget the whole thing. I was so anti-drugs. I thought the Clash had sold out when they'd got on their spliff and reggae trip. Now I was the bass player in bloody Hawkwind.

I went to the Bunnymen's dressing room. We hung out and I felt better. Pete DeFreitas, their new drummer, was so young. I felt old next to him. God, I just wished that I could relax. I was so tense all the time. Everything was so bloody important.

"This is for the hippies in the *bairnd*," I drawled, after the first song. Then we waded into the set, my head still raging. The songs sped by and I paid no attention to pace or tuning.

"Okay, this last song is 'White Rabbit'." We launched into a tense amphetamine version of 'Sleeping Gas'. It wailed on and on. I closed my eyes and drifted off, repeating over and over, *"It's so ethereal, it's so ethereal, it'ss oh eh-teer-eeal."* About three minutes into this needle-in-the-eye rant, Balfe rushed over to centre stage and shouted, "If you don't stop messing around, I'm fucking leaving."

Oh, he was awake, was he? The song ended and Balfe and I had a slagging match on stage. We continued the argument through the encores and into the dressing room. I told him that he sucked intense amounts of shit and went home with the Bunnymen.

It was like old times again. We all shared a hatred of Balfe, so we spent the whole journey cursing his stupid lisp and his general uncoolness.

It was December 1979. Wow, a new decade coming. I was married and I had a cool group. The third single was ready for release and this time I was

happy with it. Not just happy - I thought it was brilliant.

The Teardrop and the Bunnymen played a Christmas show at Eric's. It was a total party. We knew that the rivalry was beginning to pull us apart. Both Mac and I were starting to think that the other was becoming a prick.

Both groups came on at the end and we did a version of the Velvet Underground's 'What Goes On'. Mac and I danced and sang together, and hugged and camped it up. We were Liverpool's symbol of camaraderie and attitude.

Kathy went home to Leeds for Christmas. She couldn't bear it without her parents. I went to Tamworth on my own. It was fine. I don't know. I was just troubled, that's all. I played *Scott 4* all the time. It's Scott Walker's most intense record. It just lies there on the turntable, brooding.

My brother Joss had passed his driving test by now. We drove around Tamworth and he cheered me up. We sat in the car, in the rain, in the car park of Alvecote Priory, singing 'Angels of Ashes', one of Scott's most chilling songs.

I wondered about being nice. You know, what it really was.

I COULD SWING FOR YOU

"Yeah? Well I've heard some of it and it's crap. And they've ruined 'Villier's Terrace' as well. It just churns along."

I was talking to Yorkie in his basement. I was smug as hell. The Bunnymen had started their album in South Wales and it sucked a big one. A guy called Pat Moran was doing it. It sounded as though he'd got them all to play as loud as possible, then done the crossword.

I was still licking my wounded heart over the Bunnymen's record deal. Bill and Balfe had tried to get us a deal with CBS, but the A&R man, Howard Thompson, said we were a good group but I couldn't sing and I looked terrible. Balfe enjoyed telling me that last bit, but they were both worried. We were getting bigger all the time, but the major companies thought we could never cross over, so it was not worth the effort.

The Bunnymen album was cancelled for a while. Everyone agreed that they should start again. It gave us a breather, as we had no money to record. The Bunnymen started turning up at Yorkie's with new guitars and amplifiers. Mac's clothes were getting flasher. They were getting away from us.

I wanted that record deal. It was on my mind, night and day. I wanted what Mac had and I Could Not Wait. I CAN NOT WAIT. What's the point of having a great record if it can't get in the chart?

I'd go home to my harmonium every night and pump out these great dreary laments. On into late evening, I was there, on my own. "No, it's okay, Kathy. Yeah, you go to bed, it's cool."

In public, I was the Happy Guy. Record deals? No, I'm not sure if we want one, really. We've got more control if we stay on Zoo. Bill says he'll pay to record our album. You see, if you've got your shit together, you shouldn't have to rely on big business. And on and on and on.

While we waited for 'Treason' to be released, I spent some time with Pete Wylie. He'd walked into the tea-rooms in Mathew Street when I was there and told me he had a group called Wah! Heat. It was the first good new

group name I'd heard in ages. Everyone was now obsessed with long rambling names. Pete felt lost in the wake of the Zoo triumph and I was worried about him. If I felt bad about Mac's record deal, I wondered, how must he be feeling? We'd gone off and left him. Pete was doing fine, though. He wrote a few crap songs and watched us get hip in the music press. But now he appeared to have snapped out of it. Roger Eagle's partner, Pete Fulwell, had played me some stuff. It sounded great.

Wylie rang me up and said that Wah! Heat were playing their first gig and would I play organ? I was really happy. I'd love to do it, man. I'll come down. In the gloaming of Eric's, Wah! Heat cranked out their noise. I walked in and hugged Wylie. It was like being free. They'd brought in an old Farfisa for me and I just had to do my thing. No directing, no voice problems and no rivalry.

I knew 'Better Scream', as it was the forthcoming single. I learned it quickly and added a Doors-y solo to it. It was a great song. It's got an ominous veil over it. I had wondered if he was talking about *The Illuminatus*. We played it over and over that day, and I never asked him.

One song was called simply 'Tempo' and I knew it had to be named after Wylie's Stuart Sutcliffian mate Steve Tempest. Wylie had initially formed Wah! Heat around Tempo's bass playing and vibe, but Tempo was a legend, not a bass player, so Pete had eulogised him in song instead.

A few days later Wah! Heat played their first show. It was great. I stood crouched over the organ, concentrating and watching Pete Wylie. There was a real anxiety in him and on a song called 'Somesay', he stood stock still and steamed, just like he'd completely seized up. "Some say our ideals are jokes, some say on our words we'll choke." Both I and the audience were totally absorbed. He had no records out, but Wylie had a following in Liverpool without that shit. He'd lost his Clashisms and had a set full of snotty strung-out bitch-ballads. Pete Wylie, the gothic Glen Campbell.

Uh, Look Out!

TREASON

And so it came to be that every day the atmosphere in the Zoo office became worse and worse. I couldn't bear to be in there when the McCulloch thing was happening. We avoided each other as much as we could.

Bill had called Mac "the new Frank Sinatra" in *NME*. He also said I was pretty good, too, in a patronising half-assed way. I needed Bill. I needed him even more at the moment, but the Bunnymen needed nursing all the time. I wanted us to do a film. Nothing expensive, just to get down what was happening with both groups. "Yeah, yeah," said Bill. And that was the end of that.

But I was getting desperate. Balfe and I spent our time in Callan's, a military shop in Whitechapel. We bought heavy-duty belts and US parachute boots really cheap. I had a few entire outfits, because they were so cheap.

Balfe said we should buy a vehicle. Yes! I'd seen this fantastic armoured car up by the Anglican cathedral. Find out where that guy got his from. Okay. I just felt that we needed something cheap. If we had no major record label behind us, surely we could appear like we had money.

It was difficult to haul all these things together. Every day I was more hung up and tense. Mick Finkler hated the idea of dressing the way Balfe and I did. Gary had started to, but tended to turn up dressed in entire outfits. He was obsessed by Robert Mitchum and would dress like a military general or an American sailor. I'd say, "No, man. It's got to be four people in the same kind of clothes, or we'll look like a showband."

Then, in early March, *Sounds* rang us to say that 'Treason' would be single of the week. Yes! We felt as though we had made it, as they'd rung up to tell us. We rushed out to buy the magazine as soon as it came out.

The singles review was way out. Wah! Heat had half a page on their 'Better Scream' 45 and our single had another half page. Dave McCulloch, the journalist in question, had written his head and his ass onto the page. He called us "one of the most important bands in the country" and summed it

up at the end: "Everything, the skill, the delivery, the touch of quaintness, the confidence, the commitment, points to a record of classic nature."

My head reeled. It was the first record that I was proud of and the review said what I wanted to hear. In the Wah! Heat review, we were even called "the already near-legendary The Teardrop Explodes". Awlright, this is the kind of shit I could believe.

Coming in the wake of what seemed like continuous rejection, everyone's response to the 'Treason' 45 lifted my head way out of the mire. The record was no. 3 on the Alternative chart for weeks and by the time it had finished had sold 25,000 copies. So stuff your major labels, I thought, we're going to do an album on Zoo.

It was time for us to tour. Of course, the Echo & the Bunnymen tour was going ahead first. Naturally. They had Warner Bros. backing them. I was resentful as hell. Our gigs would be in the same places, but theirs would look better.

Not necessarily, though. Anyone could do stuff with money. The Bunnymen have never had one single non-musical idea in their head.

We spent our days in Callan's military shop. I knew Carl, the main guy, really well. I'd go in and spend hours buying pre-1947 US flags.

"That's worth about £15 now. You can have it for three," Carl would say. "Here, get this entire World War 2 tank outfit. It's only £8."

God, the stuff in there. It was a lifetime's supply of stage props and stage outfits. I'd take Mick Finkler. He dug the stuff, but was worried about us becoming showbiz. I knew what he meant, but we would do it properly, keep the stage as the main military motif and keep our clothes as low key as possible.

I was reading books on Vietnam - *Nam* by Mark Baker and a thing called *From Five Miles Up*. I'd ripped off shitloads of ideas from that book. We had a new song called 'Went Crazy'. The song title was a chapter heading about the way soldiers lost their mind. I had used a rhyme from the US military as the middle-eight:

"Oh, if you have a daughter, bounce her on your knee,

Oh, if you have a son, send the bastard off to sea."

It was a cynical, mean little rhyme. I changed "bastard" to "blighter" to suit our Englishness better.

Everything was coming on fine. First the two Zoo groups would tour, separately for the first time. Then the Bunnymen would record their album, again in Rockfield in South Wales, and we would follow straight after that and do our album.

I was busy enough to forget my obsession with record deals for a while. Dindisc were interested, but they'd just signed Orchestral Manoeuvres, so they could piss off. A & M claimed some interest, but I think Bill and Balfe were just trying to keep my hopes buoyant.

One day, walking through Whitechapel, I bumped into Pete Wylie and Johnno, one of his young mates. I said I'd see them in Probe, but I had to pop into Zoo. The office was 20 yards away, across Button Street. I ran into the Zoo office and laughed my stupid head off.

Bill Drummond, the greatest guy of all time, was sitting on his own in the office, surrounded by scrim netting. You know, the camouflage netting that they put over tanks. It covered the entire office and it was brilliant. I didn't say anything, I just flopped down on the floor, among the chaos of the nets, and said, "Bill, this is Godlike." Who needs a bloody record company advance, when you've got ideas galore?

Bill was quiet. He wouldn't look at me. I asked what was wrong. Nothing could freak me out, this had made me higher than I'd been for months.

Bill said quietly, "It's not yours." I didn't know what he meant. "It's not for you. The scrim."

I couldn't work it out.

"Julian ... It's for the Bunnymen tour."

Bill did not look at me. His voice trailed off. He had fucked me up the ass. He had fucked me up the ass and then cut off my balls, and then? He'd sucked my brains and served them to Echo & the Bunnymen.

I was dead.

FUCKED UP THE ASS AND TOLD TO ENJOY IT

"One thing you can't hide, is when you're crippled inside."

John Lennon

I walked out of the Zoo office onto the dingy second floor landing of Chicago Buildings. I made for the stairs and climbed up and up, to the top floor, and found my way onto the outside balcony. I looked out across towards Church Street and I sobbed and I sobbed. I could not think. A black, black desperation enshrouded me and the most evil of evil thoughts flooded into my mind, as though any moral dam in my head had been smashed and swept away by the torrent of vicious unthinking treachery that had taken place.

Oh my God. I wished evil and mayhem and destruction on each individual Bunnyman, four guys who were still unaware of the chaos they were causing. But that made it worse. They didn't know about the scrim and the camouflage. Bill hadn't told them his idea. It was our thing, man. It was my fucking bastard idea.

I stayed on the roof. I was embarrassed as hell. Shit. Now Mac was going to have the best stage set ever. The guy who'd laughed at my camo and swanned around in his funky new gear was going to tour in MY OUTFITS. WELL, FUCK MY SHIT, McCULLOCH!

I stayed up there, in just that one position, for what seemed like hours. Then I caught the 73 bus back home to Devonshire Road. I went into my music room and glowed pure evil. The embarrassment. It just flooded over me, again and again. Then there'd be a seventh wave that just carried me deeper down, and over the rocks.

I cried. I kicked the hell out of things. But, most of all, I stayed silent and motionless, and looked straight at the floor of my room. I stared and I stared until my eyes saw only directly in front of me, and darkness clouded the edges, and a tunnel formed, and I slipped into a mood of total inert psychosis.

And I sat there. And I thought that I would stay very quiet for a very, very long time.

That night, there was a noise in the hall and Kathy stuck her head around the door of my music room.

"Bill Drummond's here. Are you gonna speak to him?"

I was sitting in the same place I'd been all day. Bill walked in, his tall frame stooping and sheepish. He sat next to me and we both stared at the same patch of wall. There was silence for a couple of minutes, but I felt comfortable with it. Then Bill began to talk.

"I'm sorry, Julian. I should have told you. I do feel really bad." He fumbled for words. "It's just ... well, it seemed perfect for the Bunnymen. And ... well, we couldn't have afforded it for the Teardrops anyway. You know. I wanted it to be right."

I sat there. I understood him. It was a typical Zoo bullshit. He just liked the idea and had to do it now. If it was the other way around, the Bunnymen would have missed out. Balfe and Bill were so pleased with themselves that they were treating both groups like pawns. I could hear Bill talking in the background, but I wasn't listening. Eh, who cares? The Bunnymen are like sheep anyway. If Mac's given any idea, he thinks it's his own by the next day. They can all sod off.

Drummond got up and prepared to leave. He said some confused stuff about how they were a group, and how he loved groups, and he had this vision of them as The Rolling Stones, and how The Teardrop Explodes wasn't a group, never was, and I would always do precisely what I wanted. Then he said I was more talented than them, but he could direct them because they were not so wilful and they let him get more involved.

He finally left. I sat alone, again. Bill Drummond had said only one thing that I had heard. He had said I was more talented than them. He had said it for sure. Maybe he had said it to help ease his way out of a sticky situation? I didn't think so. He had said it so matter of factly that I believed him. Whether or not it was the truth, it appeased me.

There are certain marker-posts in everyone's lives. And this was one of mine. That day I stepped over a problem and into a new phase of possibilities. Yeah, I'll give them their camo, I thought, trying to belittle the very thing I'd been so desperate for. It'll be their gimmick. And in a muddy and confused way, I felt almost good.

BE WARY OF PEOPLE WITH KNIVES IN THEIR BACKS

It was the final and absolute end of our innocence. And any thoughts we may have had that all this was still a game had now to be buried forever.

Mick Finkler and I had written all the main songs, but I felt that he was lacking ideas. The first year had been chock-a-block with riffs and stuff, but lately I had been bringing in all the songs. Gary would sit reading *Sounds* magazine in the corner of the basement, occasionally looking up to see if we were struggling or getting somewhere.

Then, out of the blue, we wrote a song called 'When I Dream'. It was our most melodic yet, built around this circular bass riff. I sung the whole song pretty much off the top of my head, in one go, anchoring the words with the bass and drums. I wanted it to sound like The Seeds. Around this time I was listening to their live album *Merlin's Music Box* almost exclusively. I have periods like that. Sometimes it's good to steep yourself in one style.

We played it to Balfe, who added a sparkling toy-piano part. It sounded like a single and I wanted to write more, straight away, but I was frustrated by Mick. See, he would play only his own guitar lines. I found it frustrating to have a song turned down only because Mick could not think of a part. His snobbery and hang ups were losing us valuable songs.

I turned more and more to Balfe. He was excited and wanton. I said, "Let's fuck all the art-shit. Let's call the album something ridiculous." Balfe suggested "Everybody Wants to Shag The Teardrop Explodes'. Gary and I loved it.

Mac was getting into the "I'm a great artist, therefore I 'm serious" angle, the very thing we'd always laughed at. No way would I fall for the art-trip. Round at Balfe's flat, I played him the *Forever Changes* album by Love. We'd been compared to Love in some interviews and Balfe wanted to hear them. It was another revelation for him. Beautiful acoustic guitar melodies under the most righteous trumpets in the world. But sneaky messed up lyrics that were gross in places. Arthur Lee, the songwriter and leader of the group, was a heavy dude.

Balfe wanted to use trumpets. He'd already contemplated a full orchestra in the wake of his Scott Walker schooling, but we figured trumpets would less easily swamp the group sound.

My hang ups were worked overtime as we got no nearer to a major record deal. We went on tour and it was great and all, but not the same as with a deal.

We played to more people than the Bunnymen, but their tour was so well advertised that it appeared as though they were bigger. That did my head in.

The live show got more psychotic throughout the tour. We were getting more used to stringing songs out and taking them down. Grooves would churn on and on. One night, at Bath University, the keyboards broke down halfway through the set. I gave Balfe my bass and played Mick's spare Fender copy. We played drony jams for about half an hour and I recorded the whole thing. I was getting into spontaneous shit. It was only 50% good but I liked the pressure.

In Glasgow, we played a packed and minuscule club called the Bungalow Bar. Aztec Camera were supporting. We were told that their singer was 12. We had to play an hour's set! We decided to extend everything and were still working on it when Bill Drummond got a phone call.

It was Tony Wilson from Factory Records. Ian Curtis, from Joy Division, had killed himself. We couldn't say anything. I freaked out. He was one of our peers. He can't die. That's fucking ridiculous.

Halfway through the set, I quietly announced the horrible news. People didn't react. I don't think they could believe it. You come to enjoy yourself, I guess. Not to hear that kind of news.

During 'Sleeping Gas', I sung a Joy Division song called 'Novelty' over it. It was just for me really. It made me feel better, a bit anyway. Ian Curtis, man. What a sweetie.

'Treason' was selling loads, but in alternative shops. The new Echo & the Bunnymen 45, a great song called 'Rescue', was at no. 62 in the BBC chart. Yet it sold less than 'Treason'. That blew my mind. It just was not fair.

By the time we finished the tour, the Bunnymen were ready to start their album in Rockfield. Bill Drummond and Dave Balfe were going to produce it, under the name The Chameleons. They got in everywhere. Ian Broudie, a friend, had already produced two tracks for the Bunnymen album, then been kicked off the case.

We bided our time in Liverpool, then drove down to the studios, a few days before we started our album.

Rockfield Studios are about five miles outside Monmouth. The B4233 cuts its way through a shallow V-shaped valley with farmland and woods on either side. About a mile before the village of Rockfield are the studios' many buildings.

On the top of a steep hill, to the right, is a large white farmhouse. We drove up the narrow lane slowly, as both sides were obscured by thick hedges. At the top of the hill, we got out of the car and I looked back across the valley.

On the other side of the road was the studio. It was about a half-mile away. I put on my glasses and could just make out the figure of Les Pattinson walking across the courtyard.

We took our stuff into the white house and chose bedrooms. I looked out of the back window and saw Will Sargeant standing at the farm gate. At the back of the house, the land slopes away and down to the River Monnow. I dropped my bags and ran down to see him.

"Will, how's it going? Is it a classic or what?"

"It's crap."

Will was obviously very upset. We began to walk slowly down to the river. "Fucking Dave Balfe. He has to clean everything up. He has to make it poppy." Will spoke slowly and bitterly.

I knew what the main problem would be. Balfe had little regard for people's feelings and someone as gentle as Will would have no defence. I could threaten and scare Dave Balfe, but Will would just bottle it up and slowly freak out.

We walked about a mile along the river towards Monmouth. I tried to console him. He was inconsolable. He wanted to sound like Television. He wanted sharp angles and swooping chiming riffs. We carried on along the river, like Winnie the Pooh and Piglet, his mind blown by events in the studio, my mind blown at the anticipation of events in the studio.

Soon, the Bunnymen were packed and gone. I heard their album. It was brilliant. Just brilliant. It *was* like Television and it chimed like crazy. I was jealous, and nervous about some of the production. In typical Zoo fashion, Balfe had put our hallmark keyboard sound on their record. Also, on their *tour de force*, a song called 'Happy Death Men', he'd used fanfare trumpets. I was consoled only because the trumpets sounded shit. They were like cheap synthesizers, all reedy and horrible.

The Teardrop record had to be finished in two weeks. Drummond had remortgaged his house to pay for it. It was an act of extreme faith and we had to deliver.

We started slowly. Compared with the Bunnymen rhythm section, Gary and I were a liability. Balfe and Bill grew impatient. On the 20th take of a song called 'Poppies in the Field', Dave Balfe shouted at us, through the headphones, "Come on. That sounded fucking crap. Pete and Les were doing it in one take. Two at the most."

His brilliant use of psychology brought the session to its knees and I walked out. It was like that for the whole album.

When Mick recorded his guitar parts, no-one was happy. What had sounded great on stage sounded prosaic and unimaginative in the studio. We told him to change it. He sulked and said it was perfect.

We ploughed on, more concerned with finishing in time than making a great record. Balfe added too many keyboards to make up for the lame guitar. I sung my best, but it just felt like work.

In two weeks we were finished. We left the studio with knots in our stomachs and a sense of loss. A first LP is an event. An accumulation of all the ideas you ever had in your life. I had put no more than 10% of my ideas in. They were either suppressed through lack of time or not taken seriously.

Our album needed an early release in order to get Bill's money back. Tim Whittaker, a Liverpool legend and flatmate of Balfe, painted a mandala as the album sleeve, with the title of the record right across the top. It looked really good, in an independent sort of way.

Bill cut the album and we listened to the acetate, a facsimile of the finished record. It missed by miles. I wouldn't say anything, though. If I had my act together, we would have a deal and we wouldn't be in this mess.

Then came a breakthrough. Phonogram Records were interested. "Phonogram are crap," I protested. "They don't even have paper labels." I was very purist. I refused to sign to a record company with plastic labels.

"Oh, fuck off, Copey." Balfe didn't want to hear that shit.

But Bill did understand. We both had a powerful sense of the aesthetic, on whatever level it was. "I don't want you to sign to Phonogram either, Julian. The guy who wants you is a real dickhead, but he's a big fan. You need that. You need someone who'll kill for you."

He was right. But Phonogram? Who do they have that's cool? No-one. I could think of no-one. Bill said that he'd use Phonogram's interest as a carrot to some other companies.

Time passed, and we had Dindisc and A & M vaguely into us. But the Phonogram guy was not to be put off. He had said something that made Balfe and Bill laugh a great deal and they told me as though it was the most ridiculous thing ever: "Guess what, Julian? The Phonogram guy thinks you can be a pin-up."

They laughed so much when they said it that I laughed too. By now I'd been slagged off by so many record executives that the idea of myself as a pin-up sounded as ridiculous to me as it did to everyone else.

Then I thought about it. The New York Dolls' albums were on Phonogram's subsidiary label, Mercury. Yeah, we'll record for Mercury. And I'll be a pin-up. Uh, Look Out!

LOSE YOUR SENSES

And so the pressure mounted. The pressure to get things right. The album was definitely not great. Someone is to blame. Find a scapegoat! Someone called Mick Finkler. I twisted and turned, I had to get this right.

Balfe and I were looking to blame somebody. Who better than Mick? He'd been a drag from the start to the end of the recording. He couldn't write songs anymore. He was holding us back, the bastard.

As the negotiations with Phonogram moved along, the anti-Mick feeling mounted in the Teardrop camp. Gary was non-committal in public, but quietly he agreed with us. If Mick made a simple mistake, we came down heavy on him.

Just as in any gang, once we all decided that he had to leave, anything he did made us think he was a dickhead. It wasn't his fault, it's just the way it goes. Mick was getting friendly with Wylie again. Huh, what a plank. Mick wore something crap today. God, he's so uncool. On and on it went.

Balfe got a little out of control. Any time Mick left the room during rehearsals, he'd say, "Sack him now, Copey. We should film it. Yeah, that'd be far-out. Film it in the Zoo office. I'll do it, it'll be historical."

Then we'd all dance around in the embarrassment of such a loathsome but tempting idea.

We got a call from Ruth Polsky in New York. After a first possible American trip had been aborted at the last minute, we didn't have high hopes of playing there soon. But now she was confident. And this time, she just wanted the Teardrop and no Bunnymen.

Yeeeess!

We've gotta do it Bill, we've got to. Imagine getting to New York before we've got a record contract. It would be the coolest.

Fuelled by these possibilities, we all realised that the Mick situation had to be resolved. Of course, he found out about New York and got all excited along with the rest of us. We knew we had to do it now. We even had a

replacement lined up: Balfe's friend, Alan Gill. His group, Dalek I Love You, also had a contract with Phonogram Records. His album was released soon, but he wanted to join the group.

I decided to tell Mick Finkler the bad news, but I insisted that Gary, Balfe and Drummond were there, so Gary wouldn't crumble when Mick asked him on his own.

Two weeks before the New York gigs, we had a meeting at Zoo office. When Mick arrived, we had been there a while, getting composed. We thought we looked dead heavy, so when Mick walked in, I said, "I've got a bit of bad news. You're sacked."

Mick burst out laughing. He didn't believe us. True, Gary told Balfe that he was sacked every other day. It was a group joke to sack people.

I tried again. This time I was firmer. I didn't want to embarrass Mick. It was a crap thing to be doing, especially with the timing of the whole thing. Finally, Balfe said, "Look, Finkler, you're fuckin' out of the group. It's not a joke, alright?"

Mick, understandably, freaked. He launched into a tirade about Balfe, and how he'd ruined the group, and all kinds of miserable stuff that you just blot out of your memory as it goes on and on and on.

Mick had been in the group almost two years. He'd co-written all the songs with me. I spent pretty much every day in his company. After that day, I saw him only two more times in my life. I guess that's what groups are like.

HURRAH

And so it was that in July of 1980, The Teardrop Explodes arrived in New York, with our manager, Bill Drummond, and our mate and photographer, Bill Butt. All the guilt and defensiveness of the previous months were forgotten while we came to terms with America.

I had never even flown before. I wanted us to present a very cohesive image to New York. We were hip as hell in this city and this little hick wasn't going to blow it.

Of course, Gary jumped into a cab on our arrival and said, "53rd and 3rd, bud." He didn't want to go there, he just wanted to say it. Within 24 hours of being in New York, the group was transformed into a transatlantic rock'n'roll machine.

Except for me. And even I was trying hard.

Ruth Polsky had booked our sleeping arrangements. The two Bills were staying in the Iroquois Hotel on Columbus Circle. It was a hip dump, but mainly it was near the club.

Ruth farmed the rest of us out to women she knew. I thought I was mis-hearing her when she started to put us in different cabs, but no. Suddenly Alan Gill was on his own and bound for Brooklyn. Balfe was assigned to a woman in the East Village. Gary refused and ran off to the Iroquois, where the two Bills had an extra bed.

And me? Suddenly I was being driven downtown to 15th Street by a crazy Hispanic taxi driver. It was far-out. I was determined to enjoy it. Shit, I had my US military police outfit with me. I'll wear it tomorrow, I thought.

I arrived at the apartment on 15th and 5th. What a cool address, I thought, as I handed the driver $20.

"That'll do okay." He drove off. Wow, my first rip-off. And I've only been here one hour.

The next minute I was in this strange apartment with some strange woman. We talked and I looked around for another bed. There was only one.

I flipped through her records. Hmm, pretty hip. All the Velvet Underground. All The Doors. Hey, you like The Seeds? I passed her a Seeds 45 and we talked whilst it played. What a drag, I thought. I wished she was better looking. At that moment, I'd forgotten that I was married. I just wanted to hang out in some NY apartment and make love with The Seeds playing.

That night was too weird for me. I got the ugly girl sexual gross-outs. Next morning, I dressed in my MP outfit, grabbed my stuff and fled. I could see the Empire State Building in the distance. Eh, I'll walk, it's a doddle.

Forty blocks I walked, sweating and unaware, through heavy neighbourhoods that thought I was a real MP. I even wore my crowning glory: a military police helmet. That walk gave me a short sharp lesson: don't presume that you're cool everywhere. Cool has context. Walking 40 blocks in a military outfit is dead uncool.

We were shown around by pleasant women who thought we were quaint relics from the past. Our everyday language included words like "awlright", "far-out", "it's cool", and so on. But they told us gently, and in private, "Actually, people don't say that kind of thing anymore."

It was weird that our speech bothered them. New York 1980 was a place of hang ups. We're all new wavers, right? And now these hip English groups speak like hippies, right?

That night, everyone but Balfe was in the Iroquois. There were three beds, so we figured it was fair to alternate between floor and bed. I slept in a walk-in cupboard and woke mid-morning to an empty suite. Everyone was doing their thing, so I found a bar and ate pastrami-on-rye for the rest of the stay.

Balfe and Gary scored LSD and partied and got laid and came back to the hotel in a murderous mood. I was still anti-drugs, but being with Alan Gill had started to ease my opinion. I hardly knew Alan, except for rehearsals, but he was going to be my biggest influence yet.

Balfe surged into our room, transporting like a bastard. "Way-up, how's it going?" The Balfe bug-eyes were blazing.

In the other room, I heard Gary talking to Paul Gambaccini, the American DJ. Then there was a yell and a crash. We legged it into the other room to find Bill Drummond hanging on to the legs of Gary Dwyer. The rest of Gary was hanging out of the 12th-floor window. Bill Butt and Alan helped to haul him in.

Gary was unaware of his situation. Again, he began his uncanny Paul Gambaccini impersonation. Alan and I hauled ourselves back into the bedroom. Don't mess with drugs, I thought. They'll only fool you.

The rest of the trip was fine. Everyone but me tried cocaine and fine American weed. I was too hung up. The shows at Hurrah were good but not great, except for a version of Aretha Franklin's 'Save Me'. That was brilliant and went on for hours.

At JFK Airport, they all finished the cocaine in the toilets, like true groovers should and we boarded the plane for England.

MAKING OUR WAY TO KILIMANJARO

And so the party which had begun in New York continued on the other side of the ocean. We were a different group. We signed to Phonogram one week later and I was a different person.

Alan Gill was my guru. I loved the guy. He was about three years older than me and had an ultra-quiet confidence. He didn't give a shit, he even had a moustache. And this at a time when moustaches and beards were considered the uncoolest of the uncool.

Phonogram gave us money to re-record parts of the album, so we trotted back to Rockfield with a new attitude.

The first night we were there, Alan Gill said to me, "You know, Julie, you're too tense."

I'd never been called Julie before and, to this day, Alan is the only person I would accept it from. I agreed that I was too tense, but I wouldn't smoke pot, mainly because of the tobacco.

"Listen, Julie. I'll skin up a pure grass joint. You try it and maybe you'll be less tense."

For a while now, I'd been watching with interest as the three other members of the group had begun to fool with drugs. I was not into them myself, but I began to appreciate what they did for others.

Bill Drummond told me not to take anything. He said I was bad enough straight. Think of what a pain in the ass I'd be. I told Alan Gill about Bill's fears and he shrugged his shoulders. He told me that I was a tense asshole most of the time and said I needed to relax properly. Okay, that seemed fair enough.

He built this fine long spliff and passed it to me. I had *never, not ever,* smoked a cigarette. The idea had always made me sick. Why was I doing this? I hate drugs, they're bullshit.

I sucked hard on the joint. I didn't cough, as I thought I would. I sucked again, a massive toke, then passed it to Balfe. It tasted really good and

when it came around again, I had a real heavy go on it.

I sunk lifelessly behind the couch and the rest of them started to laugh. My head cleared up. My aching, which had been there since my early teenage years, started to evaporate. Out of the top of my head I could feel all my little devils flying off. They were all muttering to each other about how I'd been saved.

Yes, I was saved. I felt clean. I was 22 and I felt free. Not hippy free, just cooler about myself. I realised that it was okay to be me. Uh-oh, revelations time.

"What d'you reckon then, Julie?"

"I reckon you should skin up another one, right now."

Alan looked over at me, and told me that the joint I'd just smoked contained the tobacco I'd been avoiding all my life. It wasn't pure grass at all.

"Fuck it, man. I don't care. Just keep them coming."

And so it began. It was the turning-point. The first time I had ever liked myself. That version of the group became a total hang-out experience.

We re-recorded huge chunks of the album. When I sang, I wanted it to be an event. Hell, you don't record your first album every day. "Hand me that spliff, I'm going to do all the singing dressed like Lawrence of Arabia."

Actually, I'd seen Sky Saxon, my hero from The Seeds, dressed like T. E. Lawrence in a picture. That inspired me. The vocals sounded 10 times, no, 50 times better.

Alan added backward guitar and we knocked out all Mick Finkler's clumsy riffs. We were making a real record.

And then one day Dave Balfe arrived with LSD. We were all sitting in the white farmhouse on the top of the hill. We had all decided to take it together and I was excited at meeting the true "psychedelic" experience.

In one review, a music writer had said: "It's time Julian Cope stopped messing around and started to write some real psychedelic lyrics." Until that time, I'd considered my words to be merely pop-art images. But the arrival of Alan Gill and the constant references to acid in our reviews fascinated me. At last, I was ready to trip. Everyone told me how the walls would melt. I'd see God and nothing would be the same again.

Dave Balfe, Gary and I all took it at the same time. We sat around and nothing happened. We waited for an hour and a half, but still nothing.

Then, out from his room, came Alan. He walked right up to me, his eyes blazing, and said, "Fucking hell, Julie. You've given me scabies."

His face was satanic and I ran into the other room. I heard Balfe say, "Oh great, Alan. He took his first trip an hour ago. Well done."

Alan came in to apologise, but I was scared of him. His face, man, it was bulging with evil. And I probably did give him scabies, too. I felt guilty as hell.

Gary and I stuck together. We looked out of the picture window across the valley to the studio. We could see Bill Drummond and Bill Butt in the courtyard. They were walking up the lane and making for the farmhouse. As we watched them getting closer, I got excited. I got so excited at the prospect of them coming to see us that I couldn't bear it. I turned to Gary, and said, "Gary ... they're coming to see *us*." I couldn't believe it. Two guys that I really liked were coming to visit us. I hadn't seen them since, well, since this morning.

My stomach began to move around. I clutched at my belly and looked across the room. What I saw astonished me. Dave Balfe was drinking a glass of milk. And worse than that, he had the milk bottle on the table. Oh my God.

I wobbled over to him and stared at the milk bottle from about a foot away. The milk scared me. It clung to the sides of the bottle and I knew that if I looked away, we'd be in terrible danger.

I sat guarding the milk for quite a while. Balfe ate two bowls of cereal and was about to pick up the milk bottle. It was so lucky I just happened to be

there.

"Don't touch the milk, Balfe!" I screamed.

"Sorry, Copey, I didn't realise." He walked into the kitchen and returned with another bottle.

There was danger all around us. I gazed over at Gary and shouted, "Gary, look out!" In the nick of time, he realised that he was sitting on a pillow. I ran over and grabbed it. I picked it up and threw it across the room. Gary thanked me. And we hugged emotionally. Still hugging, we moved crablike to the pillow and began to kick it. Kick, kick, kick. Then I realised.

"It's okay, Garfield." I called him that sometimes. "It was dead already."

The pillow lay lifeless. I knew it wasn't a dead pig. It just looked so much like one. I started to cry and Gary saw me and he began to cry too. We sat in a corner, crying and hugging each other.

Bill Drummond and Bill Butt walked in. They looked around and surveyed the scene. Bill Butt handed me a letter. "This'll cheer you up. It's from Julie Mac."

I tore the letter open and read the first line carefully. Wow, I thought, this is the best letter ever.

Gary started to talk to me, but I was lost in the first line of the letter. "Shit, Gary. Now I'll have to read the letter all over again."

I restarted the letter, but someone else bothered me. It was Balfe. "I'm going down the studio with Alan. Coming?"

No, I didn't think so. Alan was weirding me out and I still thought I'd given him scabies. They left the house and set off down the hill. Gary and I hugged as we watched them get smaller and smaller, then we looked at each other and laughed. Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha aha aha a

After about 15 minutes, the two Bills couldn't bear to be around us. As they left, we apologised through our crazed and hysterical laughter.

The phone rang. It was our sound engineer, Harry. Gary spoke to him, as I danced around the phone. I grabbed the receiver and listened. Harry de Mack has a strong Manchester twang. "Eh, are you two fookers on drugs?" It was the funniest voice I'd ever heard and it was coming out of a tiny speaker in the phone. I slammed the phone down, and Gary and I collapsed again.

Aha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha aha.

On and on the trip went. After two hours, I had to leave Gary and walk to the studio. I edged down the lane, one step every other minute. After an hour and a half, I was about 25 yards from the house. I'd look back every five minutes and Gary would be in the same position at the window. His face was pressed up against the glass and he was laughing and pointing at me.

The house was white and jolly. The windows were eyes and a mouth. It smiled at me, like a Disney house. I felt warm and safe, so I sat down in the lane, with the house still in view.

I started to read Julie Mac's letter. I'd got to the end of the first line, when I noticed something incredible. My right hand had a deep cut in it. The cut had been healing over the past days, but now it was suddenly open again. I looked into it and as I got closer, I noticed the face of Will Sargeant. If I moved my finger, the cut would move and Will's face would smile. I watched, fascinated. The slightest movement and I could change Will's entire expression.

After a while, a bunch of cows stuck their heads over the fence and mooed at me. I looked at them. They were such gentle beasts and we hung out for ages.

The hours passed and I stayed in my one position. Will's face entertained me and the cows. Every hour I'd make an effort to read beyond the first

line of Julie Mac's letter. It didn't seem to matter, though. What she had written in the first line seemed like perfect philosophy.

I heard voices and up the lane walked Balfe, Drummond and Bill Butt. They hauled me up and we walked the 25 yards into the house. Alan arrived soon. He was not satanic, in fact he was very sweet. "Sorry, Julie. I was dead uncool."

I was fine. My new guru liked me again. Awlright.

The night rode on. We were all safe in the smiling white house-on-the-hill. I tried to eat with a knife and a fork. I tried to walk without laughing. But, somehow, that all seemed way in the past.

In the following days, a new Julian David Cope emerged. I didn't worry about everything the way I had. I worried only about the things I could control. I trusted Alan Gill. He was quick in the studio and not hung up. The album was beginning to sound really good.

I walked around the farmland in my Lawrence of Arabia outfit. One night, just as I was crossing the road at the bottom of the hill, I heard a car coming around the corner. I began to run, so that I would be moving fast as the car's headlights hit me. I zoomed past with my arms flailing above my head. The car swerved to a stop. I froze. I heard two people freaking out. Finally they drove off and I continued my walk from the studio.

We'd wake up early every morning. Gary and I would take acid, as we had both finished our parts. Then we'd ride down to the studio on imaginary horses. I called mine Dobbin. Gary called his Bumhead.

The weather was fantastic. I felt good about myself at last. The LSD was clearing my mind of the deep evil I'd begun to feel about myself.

We drove back up to Liverpool for a few days. I was uncomfortable with Kathy. She didn't know I was getting into drugs. I didn't feel guilty, just pissed off that she wasn't going to enjoy the benefits. Also, my volte-face on the subject of drugs could not be easily explained. I had been a posturing oaf to Mick Finkler. I was way up there in the "I don't need drugs" Sanctimonious Dickhead stakes. The only way that I could've explained away my raging hypocrisy was to have denied half the stuff on

which our relationship was built. I decided to avoid immediate conflict by not telling my wife.

We bought a 1954 Austin Champ jeep. It was painted green, with a Rolls Royce engine. We drove back to South Wales in it, wearing full military gear. It did eight miles to the gallon and cost us a fortune.

I was so comfortable. It was the best time in my life, I decided. I had felt so tense for so long. I felt it slipping from my shoulders, a little more every day. I was becoming loose.

The album was finally finished. It was September. The Bunnymen's record had been out since the summer. They had rave reviews and were doing incredibly well. Still, we had our record deal and I was stoned and happy.

We decided that "Everybody Wants to Shag The Teardrop Explodes" was too stupid a name. Also, it lost its irony if I was to be a pin-up, ha ha. Les from the Bunnymen suggested *Kilimanjaro*, and so it was.

We drove to London in the jeep to sign the Phonogram record contract. Bill had put a clause in the contract that allowed paper labels on the first 10,000 of every single that we released. I couldn't bear those injection moulded records, yucko.

I finally met the guy who thought I could be a pin-up. His name was Dave Bates and I liked him immediately. We had kind of met before, when he first wanted to sign us, but we had all gone back to his hotel that night and thrown shit out of the windows. Then I'd had a bath fully clothed and flooded his bathroom. When we left his hotel room that night, all I'd been wearing was a pink carrier bag around my waist. But that was before we'd wanted to sign to Phonogram and I tended to be gauche around record companies that didn't impress me.

Now it was different. I was cool. I was far too cool to let any record company control me. As far as I was concerned, it was Phonogram Records? Uh, Look Out!

They hung a flag over New Bond Street, in honour of our arrival. On it was our new logo and the *Kilimanjaro* legend. Stuff was moving fast.

'When I Dream' was our next single. The album was out in October and we had a tour, too. And I had moved in two short months from Drug Puritan to Acid King.

It didn't seem dangerous. It didn't seem right. It was just the only thing I wanted to do. If it makes you more bearable, then Right On!

FALL OUT WITH ME

And so the four members of the Teardrop started a period of intense learning from each other. Whether this particular combination of people could last was another matter.

I was writing, separately, with both Dave Balfe and Alan Gill. Although Balfe had suggested Alan as Mick Finkler's replacement, there was no real friendship between the two. In fact Alan went out of his way to avoid getting close to Balfe.

For a couple of weeks, I made the trek to Alan's house in Oxton. It involved taking a ferry across the Mersey, and two buses and a walk. Alan's flat was mainly equipment. Keyboards littered the floor, drum-machine, effects pedals and tape-recorders lay on any available flat surface. In his sideboard drawers lived two rabbits and his pot.

Alan and I drank strong tea and smoked pot till it confused us too much to record. We put about three ideas on tape in all the time we worked there. One day, Balfe got jealous, so he came over with Pete DeFreitas and we picked magic mushrooms and did no work.

On finishing the album, I'd told Bill we had no songs at all for a second one. It was a drag, because we couldn't think of a good follow-up to 'When I Dream'. We needed one soon to help lift interest in the group. The album was doing fairly well, but only as a cult. I wanted to be big. I wanted to be fucking huge.

The relationship with Balfe was still very edgy. In rehearsals, he was a total bastard, making us play songs again and again, and arguing over any tiny little decision.

One day, I'd been pissing Balfe off. In a big ass way. He was almost mute with rage at the end of the rehearsal. I had a prized Television bootleg with me and I started to leave with Balfe.

"Where d'you think you're going?" Balfe asked, unsmiling.

"With you. How else d'you think I'm getting home?" Balfe and I lived only 600 yards apart.

"You can get the fucking bus. You were a dickhead today and you can't have a fucking lift."

Alan and Gary watched as the crisis mounted at the bottom of the stairs. I told Balfe how he was, one day, going to get his and started up the stairs. Then I stopped. I thought for a minute. Then I started to walk back down the stairs.

"On second thoughts, Balfe. You're going to get it now."

I charged towards Balfe, but he moved away to the cupboard. In seconds, I'd caught him and was beating his face severely.

"I'll give you a lift, I'll give you a lift," he squealed and that made me hit him harder.

When Balfe was good and beaten, a smiling Gary Dwyer stopped the fight and we drove home together.

It was constant assault, both verbal and physical. And they were always confused one-sided fights, because of the drugs.

Dave Balfe always needed three capsules of everything to everyone else's one. We'd be gibbering in no time, but LSD could not obliterate his sense of reason. He was convinced that he was right, even on the most ridiculous points.

It began to get on my nerves. We spent all our rehearsal tripping or skinning up huge spliffs and rolling around the floor.

We would have lunch at Brian's diner in Stanley Street. It was the coolest place to eat when we were tripping. I'd sit and watch in hysterics as the chicken levitated off the plate. There were whole gangs of guys in Brian's high on LSD and admiring the acrobatic food.

Then one day, we were preparing for a John Peel radio session. The unassuming Alan Gill walked into the rehearsal room and said he had a song. It needed lyrics and a melody, and it was called 'Reward'.

I loved the name and watched as he showed me the bass line. Then he showed Balfe the organ line and we jammed on it for 10 minutes. It was

brilliant. Like a spy theme and completely breakneck. One part was an obvious hook and in no time I sung the chorus: "*Until I learn to accept my reward*." We jammed some more and I said I'd finish the lyrics in time for the Peel session.

The next day, I was standing in the BBC studio, in London, preparing to record vocals for our new song. At my feet were all the other members of the group, looking up to give me inspiration. I started my first vocal take: "*Bless my cotton socks, I'm in the news.*"

There was uproar. At the end of the take, Balfe said he hated that lyric. Then he said he loved it. Then we all realised that the song was brilliant and got really happy.

Then we went on tour and the whole scene went down the toilet. We fought every minute. Alan couldn't bear to talk to Balfe. I shared a room with Alan, but I blew his mind because I required constant attention.

Gary went on one of his loner trips and changed his name to Philip Brittle. He wouldn't listen to rock 'n' roll – only Frank Sinatra. He'd bought a cassette of 'Old Blue Eyes is Back', but threw the box away and kept the tape in his 'undies.' Gary's undies were legendary. Like Queen Victoria' bath habit, Gary Dwyer changed his undies every month, 'whether they needed it or not.' Every time Alan, Balfe, or myself got out of hand on that tour, Gary would threaten to get 'the Frank' out and go berserk with it.

The shows were brilliant, but only because of the tension. I never took acid on stage at this time. We got very high on pot and then some amyl nitrate turned up with some fans. They were following the tour, so we were guaranteed to be fucked up for the entire tour. Amyl is for weak hearts. It sets your head racing and your temples bulging.

In the middle of the tour, we recorded *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, the BBC's long established 'rock' TV programme. We arrived at Shepperton Studios, which is owned by The Who. After four hours of waiting, we walked out to the stage.

But first we inhaled amyl nitrate and I kicked the dressing-room door down. I wasn't trying to be rock'n'roll. But amyl makes you Hulk-like.

My senses heaved to and fro as we were introduced and the whole group bounded into a song called 'Ha Ha, I'm Drowning'. It was dreadful. My voice was shit, the guitar was deafening me, and the brass, oh man. These two young trumpeters we'd hired were the absolute crappest of the crap.

The first song ended and I said something in fake French. As soon as I said it, I thought, Uh? Then off we were again, into a contemptuous version of 'Reward'.

GET OUTTA YO-VILLE

In Yeovil, the show was cancelled. We waited around and two long-term fans gave us some weird blotter acid. The evening was free, so Alan Gill, Balfe and I decided to take the acid at the hotel.

It was an ancient place. A beautiful old inn with a huge bar and low-ceiling corridors. We all sat in Gary and Balfe's bedroom and took two tabs each.

Gary said he wasn't going to do any. "We're doing too much," he said. "I'm off down the bar." And he was gone, for an evening of heavy drinking with Harry de Mack, our Mancunian tour manager.

We settled down in front of the TV to watch Charles Bronson in *Streetfighter.* We smoked a few joints and waited for the acid to start.

The film was a really intense '20s scenario with Charles Bronson doing his regular stoic thang in a flat-cap and braces, and we all soon got sucked into it. I'd almost forgotten we'd taken acid, when, Brang! The whole room was flooded with the film. *Streetfighter* spilled into the ambience and we all became characters in the film.

Alan got paranoid and buried himself in his headphones, so Balfe and I went out into the corridor. It was about 9 o'clock and we wanted a drink.

We started slowly, inching our way along the floor. The corridor was bouncing up and down. It was like walking on a trampoline. I held on to Balfe, who was now clasping at the wall to keep his balance.

Slowly, and ever so gently, we made our way to the bar. It was miles down the corridor. I started to build a slow rhythm and Balfe copied me. We danced down the tunnel, with its shimmery lights. It was so beautiful. I had to stop and gasp.

A young guy walked past us towards the bar. I stopped him and touched his face, "This light goes on in here."

He looked at me, concerned, then carried on down to the bar. We manoeuvred slowly to the stairs, but Balfe could go no farther. I told him

to wait, I'd bring him a drink. I was very worried about his safety. I felt very protective of my friends and I also felt extremely attractive.

Down the stairs I walked. Hmm, I thought I had real purpose as I moved through the huge room. I wouldn't wear my glasses, as they weren't right for someone this attractive. Because of this, I squinted slowly past each table, quizzically checking every person.

My stomach oozed and rumbled as I approached Gary's table. Harry de Mack was with the most disgusting woman I'd ever seen. She looked like a hammerhead shark. I tried not to look too grossed out as we were introduced, but I found myself staring directly at her.

The others all looked wonderful to me, but through my totally distorted perception, I realised that they were all pissed out of their brains.

I looked at Gary and he was pointing at the stairs. Then I roared with laughter at what I saw. Sweating and bewildered, Dave Balfe was making his way slowly towards our table. He looked so funny and unattractive that I had to run into the men's toilet. There were five or six guys peeing and I rushed past them to the mirror. Wow, I looked great. I was so attractive. I stood and pulled faces. Hideous distorted grins. Very, very close to the glass. The guys in the toilet looked great, too. I decided that Balfe should come in to the toilet, then he'd look attractive like me.

I left the men's room and strode aristocratically to our table. Balfe was sitting, red-faced and uncomfortable, next to Harry de Mack. The hammerhead shark was disgusting him, too, and I tried to take his mind off it. He told me he couldn't handle the bar and could we leave. He was freaking out. He was quivering all over.

The drunks at the table grew very ugly to me and Gary was way too tall. And then the meanest thing happened. Harry de Mack casually poured his lager over Dave Balfe.

The hammerhead shark started to laugh her head off. Harry brayed like a donkey. He was a donkey. But a vile drunk one. Laughter echoed around my brain and everything around me shook and shook.

Dave Balfe was a jelly. A jelly who could neither move nor speak. He sat and waited to dissolve and I realised my friend was in danger.

How dare they? I'll save you, laddie. I grabbed his hand. We surged out of the bar and up the stairs. Good God, we were moving like the wind, flying gracefully along the corridor towards our home and safe resting-place.

We burst into Balfe's room, where Alan Gill lay tripped-out and inert. His head lay back against the pillow, his headphones half off.

Balfe rolled a joint to calm us down. It took him about 20 minutes. First we couldn't find a cigarette, then Balfe couldn't sit up without sliding over onto his back.

We began to calm down at last and were happy in our black shelter, the darkness wrapping us in a blanket of safety. Then Gary burst in. A drunk and disgusting Monster Gary. He towered above us and laughed crazily. Alan didn't notice him and carried on oblivious. So Gary slipped out the "Frank" from down his filthy and disgusting underpants and pressed it into Alan's face.

Alan woke in a frozen horror and screamed his bloody head off. While he freaked out, Gary cackled and dashed out to Harry de Mack's.

Around us was a scene of total emotional devastation. We just stood around, impassive and bovine. Each of us looked to the other for a way to normality.

Balfe was more composed than Alan or me, so we listened intently to what he had to say. Either it was genius or Balfe was bluffing, but he suggested that we take up the carpet in the corridor. Alan was still trembling, so Balfe and I left the bedroom and got down on our hands and knees in the hallway.

The carpet was thick and we sunk into it as we worked out how to un-fix it from the floor. Working on either side, on our hands and knees, we began to systematically yank out the carpet-tacks. The corridor stretched out in front of us, but we worked intently and vigorously. We made slow steady progress and within the hour we were outside Harry de Mack's room.

Behind us lay the empty corridor. Next to us was the huge roll of luxurious carpet. We smiled at each other, satisfied.

Two feet appeared in front of me. It was the same young guy that we had danced past earlier. He was the hotel manager and what were we doing?

Neither of us could speak. We were overcome. Then Harry opened the door. He looked down at the roll of carpet, the bare corridor and the hotel manager. "They're looking for the electricity socket," he said, unconvincingly, and we dashed into his room, where Gary, the hammerhead shark and her friend were drinking. We wondered why we were here. It was hell. Had we taken all that carpet up for nothing?

Harry was stuck outside with the hotel manager. Gary was drunk out of his mind. The shark and sharkfriend were making us sick. I had an idea. It was time to persuade Gary to do Sacky Bill.

Gary Dwyer had a few very weird trips. Sacky Bill was one of the grossest and one that he did to freak people out. We warned the shark as Gary pulled off his shorts. Then he grabbed his ball-sac and dragged it up his belly, over his dick and almost to his belly-button. It looked like a pet tortoise with a tarpaulin over it.

The shark screamed and Harry rushed in. Balfe and I rushed out of the room and down the corridor. That was it for me. I needed to be alone. I needed my own thing. I went into my room and lay down flat on the floor.

All the lights were off. My body was aching, so I pulled off my pants and shoes and lay on my back with just a T-shirt on. The gravity pulled me down like an electro-magnet. I tried to move, but I could not raise my head or my legs. As I concentrated, I could feel every tiny movement in my body. I could feel my heart bumping away, as though I were in there with it. I could feel my blood coursing through my veins. My arms and legs stretched out. My hands stretched to their tips, and then my fingers and thumbs stretched even more.

I lay there in a cruciform, stretched to my maximum size. And I was a city centre. A centre designed to control the traffic's flow. My heart was sending the blood out of the main veins and out into the suburbs. I could tell when they turned around. The tips of my fingers glowed inside and

redirected them. This endless stream of traffic mesmerised me and I lay motionless for hours. Occasionally, I would look up into the night sky of the ceiling, but I'd soon sink back to the city centre.

And so the night drifted on. Until the early morning sun eventually brought a burning grey into the room. And the LSD began to wear off, and I felt hollow inside. Like an ex-human who needs to be filled up, a real blank sheet.

And that was The Teardrop Explodes in autumn 1980. We had a great time, but it was too much. Either we couldn't bear each other or we had the best time in the world.

At Leicester University, we split up on stage. I told the audience that the rest of the group were all twats and fuck them. We left the stage, screaming into the mikes at one another.

The tour was a disaster. Sure, people came and we sold places out. But by the end, only Gary and I were still talking.

SPLIT (Parts 1-4)

Alan Gill left the group. In five months, he'd written a new single for us, saved the LP and turned me into a raging lunatic.

I felt savaged. My guru was gone before I could thank him. Bill Drummond was suggesting a guitarist called Troy Tate even before Alan was gone. Of course, we needed to keep the momentum and I felt happy to try anyone, but it was moving too fast and I couldn't keep pace with all the changes.

Troy Tate was great looking. He was dark haired and a little older than us. When he walked into the rehearsal room, he walked up to me, and said, "Hi, baby." I liked him at once.

We made a racket and he clanged his guitar the way I liked, so he was in. Within the week, we were firm friends.

Unfortunately, his niceness once more reminded me of Balfe's ugliness. It was almost Christmas. Kick Balfe out. He's a horrible person and I hate him. I told Bill Drummond, who fought for Balfe to no avail. Troy also fought the best he could. No way, I was the boss. Gary agreed. Fuck him off, the uncivil bastard. Let's get a new organist. And we'll get a new bass player, too. I'll just sing. We'll just teach the new guys the songs and keep control over them.

Troy had been in the group one month, but I treated him like an original member. Things were moving so fast, the regime needed new friends. A coup could happen at any time.

Just before Christmas, we made a film for 'Reward', which was to be the next single. We invited friends down to the Liverpool docks, mainly the Bunnymen and Zoo people. Mac didn't turn up. We were way apart by now.

Don Letts made the film with Bill Butt. It was an end of the world scenario, with our jeep zooming all over the place. We appealed to Troy's and Les's sense of bravado, and filmed them miming trumpets on a creaking platform 200 feet in the air.

Balfe wanted to be involved, but I wouldn't let him. There was a sense of camaraderie in the making of the film, but I was fooling myself really. Christmas 1980 was the beginning of my power trip and I insisted that Yorkie and my wife, Kathy, be in the film.

The video was brilliant. 'Reward' was to be released just after Christmas, very early new year. We still needed a group, though. I could think of no-one.

Over Christmas, Dave Balfe moved to a small cottage in Rockfield. He went to live with Sian, the manageress of the studio. His head was blown from the past couple of months and I was alternately trying to kill him or telling him he was great.

Bill Drummond told me that we had to hold auditions for the bass and keyboard player. I was not interested in their ability, so I entrusted Troy with that task. Also, I told him to pick someone bearable, as I couldn't tell any more. I was interested in anyone who felt even vaguely okay.

The week 'Reward' was released, Troy, Gary and I sat in a small studio at Nomis, a shit-sterile overpriced rehearsal complex in Olympia, London.

We had 32 bass players to try and 14 keyboard players. The three of us were quite unprepared for it. I'd never done auditions in my life. How can you tell who's the right guy? I took a small hit of acid and left it up to Troy. I was wearing my Lawrence outfit and holding an acoustic guitar. Troy settled down with a six-pack and we began.

The bass players were nearly all shit. I'd picked a new song to jam on. It was called 'The Culture Bunker' and gave away little of our style. That was the point, as I wanted a guy who'd listen to the song.

But as the afternoon wore on, I became restless. Some of the bass players weren't even allowed to play; their appearance alone could put me off. Some stunk of cologne and my heightened sense of smell told me not to trust them.

A young guy called Rolo McGinty walked in. His name sounded great on acid and he was cute as hell. He jammed for ages but he wasn't as good as me and I wanted someone better. We made a good friend, but eventually

picked a small Londoner called Alfie. He wasn't the best, but he funked his thang well enough.

The keyboard players were an even more unprepossessing bunch. I just picked the first guy I could bear to look at. His name was Jeff Hammer and he looked like a record company type, totally uncool and wrong for the hip Teardrop Explodes. I didn't care, though. I was crazed and gibbering and wanted to get out of that room.

Two days later, Bill Drummond and Bill Butt drove our two new boys down to Rockfield for rehearsals. Apparently, the two Bills took it in turns to weird them out with drug and mayhem stories.

BEST BEHAVIOUR

Meanwhile, Rockfield was swinging. The Bunnymen were staying at the white house whilst they recorded new songs and The Teardrop Explodes were camped at the old mill, a beautiful grange belonging to the studio.

The mill was about a mile and a half from the studio. The road between the two is quiet and it soon became a racetrack for the two groups. Our proximity drove us back together and Les Pattinson would thunder down the mill lane in our jeep. We'd see Pete DeFreitas and the two Bills hanging off the back as they swerved and tumbled down the last half-mile to the mill.

There was a Dutch group working in the smaller studio and one night we organised a raid which left them with no food or drink. Their guitarist walked in to see a devilish Bunny/Drops combination ransacking their living quarters in full commando gear. Even Dave Balfe was hanging out with us. Somehow, his being sacked only one month before made no difference to me. Balfe lived two miles away and if he was absent for more than a day, I'd send Gary and Bill Butt to find him. We'd hang out and trip and smoke at the mill. Endless psychedelic scenes by the river would drag on into the evening and I'd be sad that the hanging out wouldn't translate into working together.

We knew we had to be on our best behaviour when the new guys arrived. Troy told me to be nice. Of course I'd be nice, I was a smiling fool, wasn't I? In fact, Bill Drummond had just informed me of a new Bunnymen song. It included Mac's mean observation: "*That golden smile could shame a politician*." Bill had only casually mentioned it, but the hallucinogenics in my system focused on that one line and I *did* feel evil and mean.

One afternoon in early January '81, we were furiously skinning up joints in the main living room at the mill. Gary Dwyer and Troy Tate were also drinking heavily. Paul Simpson, our old organist, was down for the week and his girlfriend, Jeanne, was sitting around waiting for Balfe, who was writing songs for her. Of course, Balfe was with myself and Pete DeFreitas. This precluded our working on anything at all.

Gary, Balfe, Pete and I took hits of LSD in front of the TV and watched *Attila the Hun* with Yul Brynner. The film was particularly colourful and very soon Gary and I became scared of Yul Brynner's tunic. It was too bright and we had to sit behind the sofa. Every so often, we would peep out to see the film, then dart back in.

My head blazed with pleasure. My stomach felt so good that I just had to hold it and cradle it like a baby. My fingers were long and straight, proud and strong. As the full weight of the drug hit me, I pressed and prodded everything around me. I was becoming too excited about everything.

Jeanne came in with a tray of drinks to pacify us. She gave us a clear liquid that she called "Diamond Tea" and it tasted like angels' tears.

Gary told me he felt very posh, behind the sofa. I agreed. His power of suggestion was overwhelming and soon we were garbling on in ridiculous upper-class voices.

Balfe told us to shut the fuck up and that scared us. We had to leave the room and I was upset at having annoyed Balfe. In the confusion of the LSD, I wanted him to enjoy himself and not feel left out.

Pete DeFreitas decided to wear my bedsheet like a Roman toga. He made a laurel crown from a branch and also wore huge US Army boots. I named him Pulsar for the obvious reason that he looked like the cartoon mule from *Tom & Jerry.*

Then the two Bills walked in with Alfie and Jeff, the new organist and bass player. Best Behaviour. I smiled a huge and meaningless smile at both of them, then grabbed Gary and Pete.

The three of us ran into the huge dining room. At its centre was a large oak table, which Gary climbed on and made his home. He told us he was a mountain lion and that we should stay away, or he'd go "Bair-sairk ... and I mean bair-sairk."

Pete and I got some cereal from the kitchen, then I ate a grapefruit with some camembert. Oh! What a snack. And you'd think a combination like that would taste disgusting.

Meanwhile, Gary the mountain lion was asserting his authority on the dining-room table. He repeated his threat that no-one could come near him and I took this to be a challenge.

I began to run round and around the enormous dining-table. Every time I ran past the den of the mountain lion, Gary would stretch out his right paw to grab me and I'd scream. Round and round the table I ran, each time screaming in that fright that children have when a friend suddenly gives chase.

I ran barefoot around the table, cornering wildly and slipping and sliding. Up the main straight I ran, towards the kitchen, banked sharply to my right and then curved away up the back straight. I'd pass the fireplace and bank early for extra acceleration past the mountain lion, who was in his lair on the corner. Then I'd repeat the whole thing over and over.

Around half an hour into the run, my bare feet began to burn and rub on the carpet. The more I thought about it, the more my head whirled with this one unassailable problem.

Paul Simpson had been standing in the doorway between kitchen and dining room, watching events with interest.

"Simmo, get some milk in a bowl," I shouted, as I thundered past. Each lap took about eight seconds and I was pounding along. My senses were glowing and electrical and I yelled at Simmo, as he returned with the bowl of milk, "Now throw it on the carpet. It'll cool my feet down."

This he duly did, but it was no good at all. How stupid of me.

"Simmo," I shouted as I thundered past him, "it's too slippery. Go and put some Rice Crispies in the bowl."

Lap upon lap I ran and, finally, Simmo poured the mixture onto the patch of carpet at the most dangerous bend. Phoosh, my feet were cooled as I ran through the ford of milk and cereal. I had the upper hand on Gary now and I ran easily past his outstretched paws. Pete would run with me occasionally, but I was on a solo trip.

One and a half hours into the running, Gary was still doing his growl and his swiping of the air every eight seconds. We had a peculiar rhythm going, and I counted over and over as I ran.

Then, in the recreation room, a door opened and Les from the Bunnymen walked in. He viewed the scenario, asked no questions and began to run with me. It was so cool, as I needed a pace man just at that moment. We ran and ran, but the door to the recreation room was still open. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see Bill Drummond and Ian McCulloch staring at us. I tried to act normal, but a black and powerful force emanated from them and began to slow me down.

Round and round I went, my feet getting heavier and heavier and slower and heavier and slow-er anndd sslowwer anndd sslower ... and stop.

I couldn't go on. The force they created together was too powerful. I felt debauched. I felt like a kid caught by his maiden aunt who does not approve. I stood guilty and awkward, then I ran into the kitchen and hid.

I waited, curled up in a ball in the space between the fridge and pantry. I was safe here. After 20 minutes they left. Things gradually got back to abnormal and I visited the two new guys.

They were in the recreation room, playing ping-pong. I tried to make conversation, but found myself diverted by the vapour trail of the ping-pong ball. Soon, I was staring at the net, vacantly caught in their game. They seemed comfortable enough, so I told them I had to go into the attic. I got up to leave, but my legs were crablike and I was forced to walk in an ungainly sideways meander. I apologised to them profusely and left the room.

Back in the living room, Balfe had things his way. Pete and Gary had settled down to build a joint, but were in conference about each stage of the process.

I grandly announced that we were all going up to the attic to hang out and picnic. To my surprise, the others got up and did as I suggested. We walked into the kitchen and grabbed tins of baked beans, cheese and beer. Of course, this all took quite a while, but soon we were making our way up the winding and scary staircase towards the attic.

At the very top of the house, in the musty and dusty land which no-one had visited for years, we plopped down on the floor and began our picnic.

Remember how I told you that Balfe was taking charge downstairs? Well, this carried on in the attic and it was doing my head in, so I pissed in his baked beans and we argued till dawn.

REWARD

In the midst of the Rockfield trip, our second single for Mercury was released. It was called 'Reward' and it had nothing to do with the present. Between its recording in November 1980 and its release in January 1981, the entire Teardrop Explodes thing had changed dramatically.

Each week, we'd wait for our chart position. I didn't think it sounded like a hit, I just dug the song a lot. Out in the wilds of South Wales, the music business seemed a long way off. But I was still a nervous dude every Tuesday, when the charts were announced.

Slowly, the record inched its way to no. 41. We all got dead excited, but we missed *Top of the Pops* by one place and the next week 'Reward' slipped down to no. 45.

Oh well, I wasn't that bothered. See, you don't prove anything by selling records, I thought to myself.

We were rehearsing for an East Coast US tour. The main problem was assimilating the new guys into the group. They both looked wrong for the part and were both southerners, somehow lacking the bile and vitriol that made my Liverpool friends so bearable. I'd end up taking the piss out of them. Then I'd feel bad about it, so I'd placate them way too much. Rehearsals came to a stop, as Gary and I would be overcome by the power of the acid that we constantly ingested.

Troy was fantastic. A total gentleman, who sat with his tray of drinks and just bleeped in or out of conversations, depending on whether he could take it or not.

And every night, Balfe would be over. The new guys are crap, Copey. The new songs need this or that, Copey. And from under my throbbing head, I could hear a distant common sense being spoken.

Then? The impossible happened. 'Reward' went back up to no. 41. We were on *Top of the Pops*. We learned the night before and celebrated all evening. Balfe wasn't there and we all felt bad that he wasn't going to be involved.

The next day, Bob Proctor arrived in his Chevrolet Camara. Troy, Gary and I were travelling in his car. The new guys'll be okay with the equipment van. Let's go!

We zoomed past the studio and on towards the M50 to London. As we passed Dave Balfe's house, we looked at each other. "Yeah?" I asked.

"Yeah!" chorused Gary and Troy.

We turned off the road and up to Balfe's house. Bob Proctor beebeebeeped his horn and Balfe's dumb head came round the front door. From the car, I yelled, "We got *Top of the Pops*!"

Balfe looked pleased, but sad to be missing out.

"Come on, you dickhead. Come and mime the trumpets."

Awlright! Balfe was ready in a flash. By the time we had driven the three miles through Monmouth to the motorway, he was in charge. He handed Gary and me some LSD. They took theirs immediately, but I held off until we were almost in London. Surging and guzzling petrol, the great red shark of a Camara thundered towards showbizland.

By the time we reached the BBC TV Centre in London, everyone was fucked up. Troy and Bob Proctor were pissed out of their minds. We'd had a bit of a spliff and amphetamine party in the confines of the three-seater Camara, and the trips had begun to kick in.

We seethed out of the car and moved as one gibbering person towards the dressing room. Tony Hadley walked elegantly down the corridor.

"Hey, there's Spandoo," cried Balfe, and I danced around the singer, psychotically friendly and encouraging.

We piled into the dressing room. It was large and bright. The whole of the *Top of the Pops* studio was beautiful. I kept finding areas and inspecting them inch by inch.

Dave Bates, our A&R man, was down to look after us. He was mildly concerned that we were off our heads, but the whole group was in such a friendly mood. I mean, *Top of the Pops* is normally a big snob scene. We

found that out soon enough. But for now, we're the friendliest dudes in the business.

Waiting around was not a drag. We got to see Toyah lisp her way through some piece of kack and we got to dance on the stage during our rehearsals. The acid made us happy and nice. We gushed around the place like inbreds at a New England dinner party.

Then we were on. Troy and Balfe were miming trumpets and sliding all over the place, even before we'd started. Then our announcement and away we went.

Ber-ber-ber-ber-ber-ber Doo der-der detder, Doo der-der detder ... "*Bless my cotton socks I'm in the news* ..."

Suddenly, the song sounded like a massive hit. *Top of the Pops*, man. It's total bullshit. But it's brilliant. I loved it. Let's be huge.

Afterwards, we partied at some club, as you do. Women were nice to me. Men complimented me. I just sat there drooling all night.

Dave Balfe copped off with a great-looking woman, which somehow completed the evening for me. Psychologically, I found the best way for me to shag around was to do it by proxy. So I always helped Balfe to score. That way I wouldn't feel guilty.

We all piled back to Rockfield and rested for the next two days. We felt goood. We were off to America any time.

My wife came down. It was nice, you know. I kept off the drugs completely, as she didn't know about it. Instead, I'd make do with smoking enormous amounts of Balfe's grass. I hated that, though. You know, your wife should know your whole trip. Kathy was missing my metamorphosis and I resented it like hell.

In the days before we left for New York, I got really sad. I mean, she enjoyed our being successful, but I wasn't running to involve her. The last days before the tour were such a drag. I didn't want to go, and we said see you soon, and cried and all kinds of miserable stuff.

Then I was off. 'Reward' was climbing up the charts and we were going to America to miss the action. I packed my old doctor's case. It's about 9" x 24". I wasn't into carrying much stuff around. Also, in those days I had a rather lax attitude towards hygiene and one pair of everything did me fine.

See you, Kathy. I'll be back in two weeks.

DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH

I was standing in a corridor at the Taft Hotel in New York. I had on just a pair of leather pants and had been in the middle of a shave. Alfie, our new bass player, was standing next to me. We were both wondering whether to do anything about the catfight that was going on in the room opposite. We were on the fifth floor. There were prostitutes and weirdos hassling us, and I knew I was really in a pit.

The Taft Hotel is the place where Holden Caulfield has a very bad time in *The Catcher in the Rye.* It's recently been knocked down, which makes me feel old in a good way.

Anyway, the crashing of furniture and the breaking of heads somehow spoiled our first night's sleep in New York. We got up early, and drove to Albany, in upstate New York.

The journey was spent smoking American weed and bullshitting Jeff, our new keyboard player. Jeff was a big Christian. He read the Bible in the van, which did my head in. Then I thought, Well, he's not interfering with me. So chill out.

I'd spoken to Jeff about twice and we had nothing in common. He was an okay guy, though, and I knew we'd scared him big style with all the drugs and stuff. Shit, it was only eight months since I'd freaked out over Mick Finkler smoking a joint. Remember him? Since then, I'd changed the group and myself so much, it seemed like that had been a different person. And that was why I now sat talking to Jeff. It was a guilt fuelled by all the weird things that were changing me, the drugs, the scene and my rapidly expanding position. Jeff was my idea of *supernormality* and I wanted some of that, too.

Soon we were in Albany. I'd no idea how far we drove from New York. I guessed around 30 miles. My sense of my surroundings were confused more each day.

I missed Balfe, but Troy and Gary were impeccable companions. Also, I really dug Bob Proctor, our tour manager. He looked like a rocker Van

Morrison, very abrupt, Liverpudlian drawl, totally sarcastic, mean, surly and cool.

Albany is the state capital of New York. It's all ring-roads that lead you out of there. It's kind of like Birmingham - the traffic authorities want to keep your car moving in the hope that you'll soon get sick of their fair city and get the hell out of there.

We drove up to J. B. Scott's. It was *the* local club and it seemed like everyone had been there - Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, the Ramones, Tom Waits, posters of shows on every square foot of wall in the place.

Huh, I thought. They're going to see the real thing tonight. I checked through the set. I hadn't spent much time teaching the new guys the set. In fact, Troy had never learned half the stuff. I'd just taught them loads of new songs because they excited me. In the dressing room of J. B. Scott's club, I realised, for the first time, that I was now in charge.

"Did we learn 'When I Dream'?" I asked.

"Uhm, no. I've heard it, though," said Alfie. "How about you, Jeff?"

Jeff knew the song, so we learned it during the soundcheck. We had done nothing during rehearsals. I was so tripped out on getting control of the group that I'd forgotten it was also my job to teach them shit.

The evening dragged on. We ate pizzas and did coke in the dressing room. I was an alien here. What if I didn't cut it? At least Bill Butt was doing our lights. Also he was filming everything, which gave us a feeling of self-importance.

This was my first show without my bass guitar. I was shitting it. What if I was a total dork? What if, what if?

Outside on the stage, all the lights went out. Over the PA came our intro music. It was 'Kilimanjaro', a strange and beautiful piece, that sounded as though it was recorded in a volcano on some Pacific atoll. The final seconds ticked away and the rest of the group trooped on stage. I followed quickly and picked up my new Fender electric 12-string.

I started the set with a new song called 'Like Layla Khaled Said' about a beautiful Middle Eastern terrorist girl. The song moved into its Arabesque groove and I stood oblivious of the audience. I was fine, hidden behind the guitar. My hair was long and blond, and I stood pretending to be Tim Buckley, one of my favourite singers.

"*... just like Layla Khaled said*." Brang. "Thank you. Good evening, Albany. We're called The Teardrop Explodes and this is a modern classic. It's called ... 'Reward'."

The guitar was put away. I was on my own. The crowd was grooving away, but I'd noticed two girls at the front of the stage. They were both brilliant looking and were hip as hell. They stood right in front of me and stared.

One was tall with a long face and crazy long hair. She was skinny, and stood tall and confident. The other one was much shorter. She had punky black hair, with a fringe right over her face, dark eyes and the palest skin I'd seen. Her lips were bright red, in a kind of baby doll way, and she wore an adorable pink dress. She looked about 15 and I adored her immediately. I performed every song to her. During a new song, called 'Screaming Secrets', I lay down on the floor and sung looking up to her.

Of course, I was hung up as hell. I thought she was way too gorgeous to be really interested in me, so I figured I'd better just enjoy the set.

By the time we walked offstage, I was sad. I'd seen this perfect piece of woman. It was a total drag. Fuck, I'm married. And there's this bratty-looking 15 year old outside, who looks like my ideal.

I sat, head bowed, on the floor of the dressing room. We were okay. Not great, but we did the set properly and I had a groove. We smoked endless killer US weed and the others took cocaine.

Then Bill Butt walked in. With my 15 year old and her mate in tow. Oh fuck. They're just groupies, after all. I felt stupid. Of course they *would* be, wouldn't they? They must do this every day.

I glowered in the corner and looked the other way. Bob Proctor offered them coke, which they took. Huh, groupies, man.

Whilst the skinny one took her line, the adorable one pushed herself up against this huge '50s Coca-Cola fridge in the corner. It was so beautiful and horny looking, the way that she did it, that I shifted in my pants. She had big tits and stuck her ass out in the coolest way. Also, she had pink ankle-socks over her stockings and the cutest pink high-heels. She looked so good that I got pissed off.

I got up and walked out of the dressing room. I talked to the road crew back in the main room, then sat with my feet dangling over the edge of the stage. I was sad. Girls like that one in the dressing room really existed. She was my type, my shape, my favourite clothes, everything. Shit.

I sat there for a while, pissed off. Then I saw my two girlfriends leave the dressing room and head for the exit. Shit, I can't let them go. I have to at least talk to the one in pink. But they were about 10 yards away and I don't know how to start conversations with strange...

"Hi. Did you enjoy the show?" I just spoke. I *could not* lose her.

"Yeah, it was great." They turned and smiled. They were both great looking, really were. It's just, well I'd seen God. And she was dressed in pink with the cutest everything. She even smoked in a cute way and I hate women smoking. Somehow, on her it was cool.

We talked and we talked. They were from Manhattan. They'd driven 150 miles to Albany. They were big fans. They'd met Bill Butt the night before at the Ritz, on 14th Street. They were in the dressing room because Bill had left their coats there, for safety.

I stared at the cutie in the pink dress. Her hair covered her eyes. She looked about 17. And I'm 23. And married. Shit.

"I'm Dorian and this is Patty," announced my dream woman.

It suddenly hit me how far they had travelled. In my stupor, the whole journey had only seemed like 30 miles.

Wow, it was different then. A hundred and fifty miles? I hadn't noticed. That worried me. There were too many things I no longer noticed. Now, in

my tunnel vision, all I could see was this young girl I wanted. I mean really wanted. And me a married dude. Shee-it!

They had to go, but said they were coming to the next day's show. We made our sad and tender goodbyes, and I reluctantly let them go. I watched them leave the club, then I trailed back to the dressing room.

"Dorian ... Dorian ..." I repeated over and over in my head.

We drove the 150 miles back to the super Taft in wonderful Times Square. We arrived back at about 4 a.m. I staggered into bed and thought of the girl in the Pink dress. Then I got too horny, so I jerked off and went to sleep.

TAKE IT NOW

The following morning, I woke early and thought about the previous night. I thought about the girls I'd met in Albany and I couldn't get one of them out of my head. She said her name was Dorian. What if I don't see her again?

I left the Taft Hotel with Dave Bates and walked the five yards to the stretch limousine. Bill Butt stood on the corner and filmed this unusual event, whilst I put on my "This is every day" expression. I had radio interviews in New York all day. Later we would record a live concert at My Father's Place on Long Island.

I was learning that weird American phenomenon known as the schmooze. This is a Jewish term and inevitable business condition. It means, perhaps, a lunch or drink with someone, or an overfriendly first meeting with someone that you need on your side.

Of course, I had no intention of schmoozing anyone. I was quite convinced that it was a gross and un-English piece of bullshit that any true artist could get around.

The morning went smoothly but as Dave Bates and I made our way out to Long Island, the snow began. Down it came in torrents. Far more than any British storm. Wow, I thought. Now we'll see New Yorkers in action.

The roads out to Long Island were packed with commuters rushing home. I was surprised and disappointed. I thought that New York would be used to this weather. (Over the years, I've discovered that New Yorkers are used to this, but love to panic and appear unprepared.)

The Long Island Expressway was jammed. We were on our way to WLIR, the hip alternative Long Island station. We crawled along for miles and miles.

Running very late, we jumped into the elevator up to the radio station. A weird back-woodsman type spoke to me. "Hi, I'm Wild Bill Larsen."

Sure, I thought.

"I'm a big fan of yours, Mr Cope."

He was about the same height as me, around 6'2", but built like a brick shithouse. He wore a kind of Canadian shirt and lumber-boots, and had a mass of red hair and a big beard.

"Could you put me on your guest list, Mr Cope? I can bring you some fine mescaline for the show."

I told him that was fine. I hadn't taken mescaline yet, but I was very interested. We did the radio station and I promptly forgot about Wild Bill.

My Father's Place is a very cool bar in a wealthy little town called Roslyn. Its owner, Epi, had a reputation for bringing good and unlikely music out to the Island.

Bates and I arrived at the now snowbound club to find the whole group and road crew off their heads. Epi passed me a fine grass spliff and soon I was as gone as the others.

Technicians from WLIR walked around, but we couldn't help them. The two new guys, Alfie and Jeff, got pissed off at our easy attitude, but I didn't care. I wanted to see that girl again and it preyed on my mind, the only thing that would *not* go away.

The hours passed. The club was empty. No-one would be out tonight, said Epi. Long Island is snowbound. Where's the frontiersman spirit? I thought. And what if that exotic girl I'm so uptight about doesn't turn up?

There was a knock at the dressing-room door. It was Wild Bill Larsen.

"Hi, man," I said. "How you doing?"

"I brought the mescaline for you." He opened his palms to reveal four tiny pink tablets.

"Great. I'll take them after the show." We were on stage in under an hour.

Bill looked at me through half-closed eyes. "Take them now."

"Yeah, WPLJ, that's the song we wrote. We wrote this song, too. It's a cover version of one of my own songs. Thank you, thank you."

I was rambling on and on. I was high on mescaline on live radio, but I was happy as hell. The little girl and her friend were here again. The club was empty, maybe 80 people at most.

I was too crazy to dress tonight, so I had jeans on and a white shirt. The show was great. I was given a tape of it and we were beginning to sound the way I wanted. The songs were getting stretched and trippy, and my little girl stood at the front looking up at me all through the show.

Back in the dressing room, I was glowing. Mescaline is a devil drug. It gives everyone strange elfin features. It can be very scary. I have a friend called Dan who tried to take a bus home from the centre of Liverpool. Every time he tried to board the bus, phwooosh, the Devil would rise up in front of him. He tried all the way up Hardman Street and eventually gave up.

Anyway, I was much happier than that. I waited for my friend and her pal and eventually I ushered them in from outside the dressing room.

My girl looked more beautiful tonight. Last night, she was an adorable pre-teen vision, but now she was elegant with her white skin and an evening dress and her hair piled up and messy.

I felt bad about my feelings towards her. I was married. Shit, she only wants to be friends. Why do I have to spoil it by wanting her so badly? I felt shit, and guilty about my wife at home.

I started to talk to her friend, Patty. She was also pretty damn gorgeous, so I felt less guilty if I concentrated on her. We ranted on and on, my trip accentuating everything great about my little exotic vision in the corner. I found out that she lived on East 13th Street in Manhattan, but her parents were in Port Washington, only five miles from the club.

That evening, I was more intoxicated than ever. Back in the Taft Hotel, as the trip wore off, I lay shaking and sweating with the effects of the drugs and her total incredibleness.

Shit, man. What a dude for getting married.

HEAD-ON

"Don't you find it's hard to keep your feelings in your own back-yard?"

Sky Saxon

The whole situation was deteriorating around me. The group was looking to me for advice, but I was out of my mind. Gary and I were sharing a room, but we just tripped out and I thought about my marriage and how it would now come to pieces.

See, Kathy and I were pals. That was the whole basis of the marriage. I never wanted to jump on her, nor she me. Now I had fallen for someone else. Someone I did want to jump on. Even if she didn't feel the way I felt, I knew it was so extreme that I could never go back to such bland feelings again.

Our main New York show was at the Ritz on 14th Street. We got there early and hung out with Dorian and Patty. We smoked and talked for hours, and I felt aching and want all the time.

Patty booked the bands at the Ritz, so Dorian and I were left alone at one of the tables. We looked goo-goo at each other and rubbed noses, but the tension was so extreme.

I felt bad. Dorian knew that I was married, but I was being one of those assholes who just wants to forget shit like that.

That night, we were great. The Teardrop Explodes was hot shit at the moment. We'd had press constantly and all the hip New Yorkers were there.

It's weird, you know. I dug New York like mad, but I felt less hip than anyone there. I was freaking and bouncing off things, and screaming and dancing, grovelling at the front of the stage, down and down again. I felt so exposed. We were hip northern cool. People in London didn't understand us. How could New Yorkers? It was good to feel like that. I guess it's the only way I operated in front of alien audiences. Also, we played a lot of stuff from the next album. Stuff that was longer, more rambling. Sometimes we sucked shit, but the audience couldn't tell.

That night, I was surrounded by American women. I loved them all. Awlright, I'm the leader, no problems. Yeah, I can be a pin-up, no problem.

Dorian wore a white lace dress. It was the first time I noticed her shape. She had great tits. I love big tits. I think my mother breastfed me way too long, that's why I'm obsessed. Mind you, I also loved her pale skin, which was another total obsession of mine. She sat on my lap all evening and I pretended to her that we were just friends. It was out of hand. I told her that she and Patty could not follow us to Boston, as they had planned. She was confused, but I had to clear my mind for a while.

In Boston I heard that 'Reward' was no. 6 in the British charts. Awlright!

We played New England, but I rang Dorian all the time. I hadn't rung Kathy for weeks and it was now getting almost impossible. I felt as though that had come to an end naturally.

I was in America and feeling out of touch with any real world. You see, I was expected to act cool and lead the group and all this heavy stuff. You know, it really didn't seem so long since I was the asshole holding everyone back. Now I was dragging everyone behind me and hadn't a clue how to control it.

Every day, I'd teach them new songs. Every day, we'd pull songs to pieces on stage and operate on them. I recorded everything.

If someone said something interesting, I wrote it down. I took in constantly. But I had no real idea what we were doing. It was not exciting to be high in the British chart. I was in New York being hip as hell, man. Fuck the charts, we're going to be enormous *and* get cooler.

"All the English groups act like peasants with free milk." That's a Mark Smith quote. It struck me hard in the chest.

America is a place to consume. When you first go there, it makes Britain seem Third World. Excitement is so immediate that the turn on is quite different. You don't sit around, like at home in Britain. You get up and go out. All the time. It's so easy to be taken in. To believe it's better. It's not, though, it's just different. That's why I was freaking out. I mean, I didn't know what was normal here.

Dorian and Patty knew so many groups. They were so aware of scams and all the bullshit involved. I was this guy who knew no-one in the music scene, except for people I'd grown with. Man, it churned me up inside. What if I'd fallen for some groupie? I was off my head most of the time, so I really had no judgement.

Then it happened. We consummated our thang.

It was not intentional. No way would I have had the nerve, except in the most extreme circumstances of comfort.

Dorian and Patty and I were hanging out as a kind of threesome. On my one day off, we met at St. Mark's Place, between 2nd and 3rd Ave. I needed to buy clothes, so we wandered round Andy's Cheapies and a few old leather stores.

In March 1981, everything was still ridiculously cheap. I picked up some cool black ballet pants and we went back to the apartment on East 13th Street to try them on.

Patty made tea and I tried stuff on. Their apartment was a piece of shit, but I dug it. They shared three rooms with another girl, Tanya. Dorian and Tanya had their own bedrooms, as they were both studying at New York University. Patty used part of the living room as her bedroom, with a material partition. There were clothes strewn all over the place, and jars of make-up and stuff piled in corners. Records were scattered round the stereo and they seemed to play hip English music exclusively. You know, stuff like Joy Division, Teardrop, Bunnymen, Bauhaus and Killing Joke.

Downstairs an old Polish couple ranted and raved about the noise all day. Those apartments, shit. If I were an old Polish guy, I would have thought, surely I'd deserve more than this in life. Of course, I laughed at the old couple, along with Dorian and Patty. You do.

Patty went out to buy some stuff from the deli on the corner. I put on some music, and Dorian and I assumed our natural positions, that is, facing each other so close up on the couch that our noses touched. We talked like that for a few minutes, but we were alone. I couldn't let this opportunity slip away. So what if I'm married? I'm not really, not in my heart.

Our mouths were almost touching, in any case. I threw caution to the wind and just kissed her. Very gently. I had to feel her lips, I just did.

She kissed me back! It was alright. We kissed some more and then we got hot and Patty walked in with the tea.

Embarrassment. Patty walked into her sleeping "area". I dragged Dorian into her own bedroom. We fumbled around for a few minutes and then we made love.

It was like the first time. You know how it is when one partner is inexperienced. It makes you feel the same. I asked her if it was her first time. It was her second.

It was messy and beautiful. Sheets all over and clothes pushed up, and indecision and freaking out. And her head done in, and my mind blown, a religious experience, including all the guilt and faith you ever wanted or needed.

I loved her and that was it. Pain. Pain was my life from now on. I was going to cause a lot of pain for myself and everyone around me. The guilt washed over me, then it began to settle.

And that was it. I was not married. I had a new love.

Bill Drummond and I swapped rooms at the Taft. He shared with Gary and I brought Dorian to stay with me. It was a trip, an excursion that I never would have expected. Head spin. Tail spin. Male spin. See the spin I'm in.

Of course, Kathy rang from Liverpool. Bill answered the phone and played it uncool, so she got nervous. Ha, I did not care. I was in heaven.

Breakfasts in diners in Times Square. A girl with so many layers of clothes on, it was a Catholic guilt trip just to get undressed. The room in the Taft was awash with male fluid and female blood. We crashed and battered each other, and I forgot everything.

I wrote a song called 'Bent out of Shape'. It was her favourite phrase, and alien to me. From then on, the blood we spilt was always significant. I subtitled the song 'I Love You (in Ragtime)'. Menstruation is a total drag for women and a head trip supreme for men.

In the following days, we drove to Hartford and our New Jersey gigs. We stayed together in Washington and heard that the *Kilimanjaro* album was getting big in Britain.

It was nonsense, though. All I could feel was right now. And now was going to be over, any minute. We cried and wailed in the car, a beautiful silver 1980 Ford Mustang. We drove and fooled around all the time. She finally got round to telling me her last name. It was *Beslity*. A Hungarian name that got changed at Ellis Island. Dorian Beslity. As we drove along, we did each other with our free hands. And time ran and ran. Until it finally just ran out. And I was gone. Leaving a beautiful girl crippled with love at John F. Kennedy Airport. And back to Britain and a host of possibilities that I didn't ever want to comprehend.

I locked myself in the toilet for some of the flight. Other times, I just wept openly and ran my face up and down the plane window.

Eh, fuck it, ma n. Fuck every single thing in this tiny enormous world. 'Cause I'm going to die without precisely what I need. And I neeeeed!

BAD ONE

At Heathrow Airport baggage claim, my head bulged and weighted down in an agony of 10 million worries. What if I never saw Dorian again? How do I even begin to tell Kathy? Where do I live now? How can any reasonable person expect me to keep it together? Fuck them all, they don't know shit about love.

The drugs in my system were coursing around, scurfing up my veins and distorting my vision of things. By the time I got out into the main terminal, I couldn't hold it down anymore and I ran with my baggage cart out of the customs and down the gangway, where hundreds of stupid idiots were welcoming their loved ones. What about me, you bastards?

I ran and I picked up speed and no-one was around when I got to the wall, so I just slammed right into it. The stupid cart turned over and my bags spilled all over the floor. Then I got up and ran at the wall until I was senseless.

Bill Drummond ran up, just behind two policemen, who asked him if I was on drugs. He said it was far more than that and they said I was to get out of there. They were really pissed off. I thought, You stupid dickheads, what do you know of any tiny part of this world, and I raged away as Bill and his friend Henrietta whizzed me off to the Columbia Hotel in Bayswater.

I awoke in Room 305, about six hours later. Peaceful now. I was feeling becalmed and beautiful. The room was pitch black and strewn with my clothes and stuff from America.

At the Columbia, I always took the main blanket and tacked it over the window. Then I'd leave the bed-shell in the corridor and sleep on the mattress. The Columbia staff were cool about any shit you did.

At the top of my toiletries bag I found "Little Dorian", this tiny faded Magyar doll with a cream and green dress and hair almost off. A present of true love which the real Dorian had never been without since she was a baby. I clutched at the little doll and jerked over on my side. My stomach. It groaned. I couldn't get away, I slung myself round the bed, kicked the

sheets out, pushed my head up against the wall till the pressure and pain soothed me.,

What do I do? What is this? America was the other side of the world. I was a dead man. At least dead. I couldn't even walk or piss. I crawled over to the corner of the room, my mouth dry and my lips chewed to pieces. I stuck my head under the blanket at the window and looked out over Hyde Park.

Then, with just a T-shirt on, I took in the sights of London's coolest park whilst I pissed long and hard into the carpet. I stayed in that one position about two hours. The movement and the intense orange colour of the streetlamps appeased me. My knees became blocks, cornerstones which held me together. I was huge and beautiful, like a large dog at his master's window.

I thought about Dorian in New York, and my bare feet dug into the carpet, and I had to get out of there. But where to? Who can understand this shit? The rest of the group were a bunch of disparate personalities and I had no sense of camaraderie with anyone but Gary. If I asked Troy, he'd be sweet and say, "It's okay, baby." I didn't want that, I wanted the full hugs and kisses understanding treatment right now.

I called my parents in Tamworth.

I sat in an empty first-class compartment of the London-Manchester train. We were still at the platform at Euston station. I didn't want anyone to get in, so I laid my meagre bags around the seats and pretended to be asleep, my legs blocking the entrance.

The train filled and filled. I hadn't washed my clothes so I guessed that I stank, and no-one came in. Then, as the whistle blew, an elderly Irish guy with no luggage got in. He smiled, blew up one of those dumb aircraft pillows that fit around the neck, lay down and went to sleep.

In my corner, I read the address in my lyric book: "La Dorian, 236 E. 13th St. Apartment no. 24, New York City." It was so foreign. How could I keep in touch with someone with that address?

I began to write to her as the train pulled out of the station and into the environs of Londonurbia. Tamworth was 100 miles away. I'd be there in an hour and a half. God, these days never end, they just merge one into another. I'd arrived at Heathrow at 7.30 a.m. and it was still only 12 hours later. Time sensed that I was confused so it went right on and fucked me up more. In the blackness of the old compartment, I watched the stations I knew so well flash by me, their names so English and quaint to this well-travelled boy who'd been to America and flown two times for God's sake.

Bletchley was soon gone and stupid Milton Keynes, and then Rugby, Nuneaton ... Whizzing through Polesworth, I felt a little calmer. The darkness couldn't obliterate the scene at the Pretty Pigs, the ugliest pub name I knew, and I flashed by, barely a mile from Tamworth. Or "Tarm-warth" as my wife called it when she goofed on my supposedly posh accent.

Yeah, you dickhead. You're married.

I sat in the kitchen at my parents' house. It was home, my home for 18 years until I'd left for Liverpool. Now I was 23 and a failing son-of-a-bitch. Bad. I felt major-league double-dog shitty as bastard hell.

I told my parents, in a roundabout way, that I was in love with a new woman. My father looked at me and said, "Listen, old son, your mother and I knew you weren't in love with Kathy. We understand. That's why we felt so awful at the wedding. You couldn't listen."

I understood for the first time. My parents live in a cocoon of their own making. They adore each other and only let people into their thing if it won't rock their boat. I'd always admired that, but now I knew I was a product of them. They didn't even persuade me to see Kathy.

That night, I lay on the sofa with my mother and we drank tea and talked about love and how it turns you into an inert gas that just lies there, and I was closer to them than any time in years. I resented the things they couldn't know about me. And I knew that they could never understand the drugs or the hurting myself thing. We talked until about 2 a.m. and they put me to bed in my old bedroom. I felt like a five year old and a very old spirit at the same time. Oh God, this is a bad one.

SMASH HITS BOY

It was two days later and we were walking through the streets of Sheffield. My parents had driven me up to a show at the university. It was being recorded for live radio.

We walked around, oblivious at first, but there was a trail of people behind us. Eventually, on the university campus, we were caught in a kind of pleasant mob who kept us there until security broke them up.

I was way gone and confused by this. My mother dug it, in a perverse way, but I couldn't work it out. We'd gone away as a big cult group. Now, there were shitloads of people recognising me. I hated it. It was bullshit. Girls, young girls about 14, came up and kissed me or screamed. Fuck that.

The two days in Tamworth had chilled me out. I wasn't near drugs and I felt a vague perspective returning.

The folks decided they had better leave, so I said goodbye and waved them off till they were out of sight. Then I walked back to the stage, where I was offered a huge spliff by Bob Proctor.

The show was wild. The hall held about 1,800 people, but it was overflowing and packed with asshole girls cheering for me. It seemed as though Dave Bates was right. I was a pin-up.

I peeked out at the audience and a girl grabbed me. She and her two friends started to neck me as hard as they could and their friends screamed around them. Bob Proctor shouted, "Fuck off, you bunch of slags!" and hauled me back to the dressing room. We had some small lines of cocaine to straighten me out and everyone tried to vibe me up, as I was having trouble breathing.

I sat chewing my lips in the toilet under the stage. My stomach bayed and howled. I farted a big one and Gary and Troy went hysterical. "So that's how you inflate those things," Troy laughed, pointing at my brown leather jodhpurs.

We could hear the stamping of the crowd above our heads and looked at each other. What is this? We've had a hit, that's all. So what is this shit

about?

The *Kilimanjaro* album was at no. 26 in the British chart. It had been around there since late November and now 'Reward' was helping it along.

We put it off as long as we could. Finally, the instrumental strains of our intro tape faded. The rest of the group grooved into 'Like Layla Khaled Said' and Bob Proctor prodded and pushed me onto the stage.

This was my ultimate nightmare come true. I danced and cavorted. I spun and smiled. I did every uncool thing I could think of and still they smiled. Alfie started his dumb new-wave dance and I wanted to twat him.

We came offstage and I refused to do an encore. Fuck them, they wouldn't know a good group if it drove its entire PA up their collective asses.

Outside, the hall raged. Crazyland. And my kind of crazy it was not. Collectively, they sucked more shit than any audience I'd ever seen. I could have hung from the lighting truss and wanked over them. It would have had the same effect.

Bob Proctor said he thought we should do an encore. The rest of the group agreed. I wouldn't entertain the idea, but they hassled and hassled. Fuck them and fuck you all. I reached in my bag and took out a little jar. I took one tiny hit of acid and walked towards the stage.

"'Great Dominions'," I said. The slowest tune we had. See if you dig this for an encore.

That night, at the Hallam Towers Hotel, the acid flowed over me and I wanted to die. There were girls in the foyer and in the elevators. They even enjoyed 'Great Dominions' as an encore. I had been beaten. Seemed as though I was your well-loved boy whether I wanted it or not.

I lay in a fever of brain sweats and pulsations long into the night. Fame. Ha. It *can* be overcome. I lay, giant-size, on my bed and watched the dawn through crackling radioactive brain-cells.

At 6 a.m. I hosed myself down in the bath, put on my filthy pink and cream nightshirt and went down for breakfast. I sat drinking endless tea until the place filled up.

Dorian Mary Beslity, my little Magyar-Greek vision, was 3,500 miles away in New York. We were even on different times now. I don't know, how d'you ring the US? Isn't it like £10 per minute or some shit?

I sat like a hollow man by the window. Gradually, the seats around me filled up with the rest of the group and road crew. Some girls, schoolgirls, came by in search of autographs on their way to school.

"Ay, cute boilers," said Alfie, in the brazen London-lad twang that I so detested and mistrusted.

Soon they were over at the window handing up schoolbooks for us to sign. I smiled at them. I did my bit. It was okay really. If you're into being adored by flat-chested pre-menstrual virgins.

Over Snake Pass and out of Yorkshire we drove, Troy to a hotel in Liverpool and Gary and me to our homes. We would rest a couple of days and be busy again soon.

Now I had to face reality. A wife. A woman indoors, man, not the thing for a cheating, tripping fool. We had consoled ourselves with another mild acid trip that morning and as we wound up over the rolling hills and tight V-shaped valleys into Lancashire, Gary told me about the legend of Ichomobothogogus, a two-headed goat that he'd just invented.

We rolled around the back seats about it until we hit the outskirts of Liverpool. When we dropped Gary off at home, I was on my own.

"... so I can't go back to Kath's, no way." I sat in Paul Simpson's front room in Prince's Road. I had sneaked home mid-afternoon, when Kathy was still at work, changed my clothes, then whizzed round to Simmo's about half a mile away.

He said I could stay there, but he was a big friend of my wife, too. That evening, I walked back to the Devonshire Road flat and tried to confront the situation head on. I told Kathy that my head was done in by the American trip and our weird new success over here.

"I've got to stay at Simmo's. Everything's just too weird to think about," and I was gone. She accepted it, no questions, nothing. I thought she was

stupid for that. Huh, this'll be an easy separation.

I roamed around Liverpool in a stoned drughead stupor. A hollow man in an inflatable leather outfit. I was stared at and hassled by long mac types and young girls. The brown leather flying-jacket and pants, which had been my joke, were now a famous proposition, I could tell, but it didn't change anything. I'd had these clothes on since early October and they stunk to high heaven. My hair was filthy and matted. That was the only way I could achieve such a shape to my hair. I was obsessed with Scott Walker and Jim Morrison. I wanted that elegant "short" pre-hippy longhair look. I loathed the bloody long-mac greyness that our scene had inspired. It was spring 1981 and the ugliest, most beautiful, uncomprehending time I'd ever known.

ACID DROPS, COPING WITH LIFE AND ALL THAT MISERABLE SHIT

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I was a stinking sameclotheseveryday bullshitting bad-attitude Peter Noone teenangel dustbust my o-so personal life Aled Jones acid-nobody. I fucking sucked the runniest shit and I was beautiful.

Sleeping on the floor at Dave Bates' Lisson Grove flat, in Marylebone. Sleeping in my A&R man's living room and doing TV and glamour shots all day. Did *Top of the Pops*. Had ass kissed all day. Slept alone. Did acid. Talked about myself to some female writer. Slept alone. Rang Dorian. Slept alone. Avoided my wife's phone calls. Slept alone. Slept alone. Slept alone.

I sat cross-legged in Bates' bedroom. He had the biggest record collection in the world. Four copies of 'Little Johnny Jewel' by Television. Two copies of The Spades' single from 1965, with Roky Erikson. Give it Me! A copy of the International Artists boxed set, still sealed! Give it Me! He had all the cool shit I couldn't afford. He didn't listen to them, just had them. We'd wade through piles of stuff I wanted to kill him for.

I'd do a hit of acid and Bates would do cocaine. He was in charge of making the tea and I made compilation tapes. We made eight volumes called *Total Drugs Music I-VIII* and danced around in a new friendship frenzy.

Batesy's flatmate, Droyd, would sit quietly and skin up endless spliffs. Droyd had a name, John Wilson, but he was so chilled out in every way that Droyd was his name.

I rang Dorian for hours each night, using 11 false credit card numbers that she had given to me. I was a grooving popstar, but I was still an own-nothing £35 pounds a week Zoo employee in whatever the real world was.

In Liverpool, my wife told everyone I was just weirding out. She'd ring every so often but I couldn't make any comment. I couldn't tell her. What was she? Dumb or something?

I was presented with a silver disc for 'Reward'. It had sold 278,000 copies. Awlright! They gave me a gramme and a half of coke sealed in a little glass phial as a gift and I laughed at the cliche of it all.

Mid-afternoon, high on cocaine and a small hit of acid, I roamed around record shops with Batesy. It was like Simon and Garfunkel on that famous record sleeve. Batesy was walking fast and assertively in front, whilst I staggered and drooled behind.

We met Droyd and they took me to a small club called Dingwall's. We sat secretively in the corner and I watched as my hands turned into chicken legs. In about an hour, the quiet table was surrounded by women, all talking to us. I couldn't figure out why they were here. The trip made them scary and birdlike. Carrion-crows waiting to swoop.

"Wow ... my hands, man ... Chickens a-gaaain..."

I spoke to no-one by myself. A blond girl in the melee reached for my outstretched arms and said, "They're the hands of an artist, Julian."

I looked at Batesy. Did she really say that? Do people say things like that?

Bates nodded. Yes, she had told me that I had the hands of an artist. Aha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.

I slobbered all over Droyd and we slumped into the corner of the seat. We had to leave. Now. It was a bad scene we got out of. Ten more minutes and I'd have been scared to fart.

We rolled on around streets and into taxis. I found myself thrust into a dungeonous club full of hip knobhounds. Propelled into the main room, I ran for the wall and clung to it tenaciously.

Women in black clothes and gaping red mouths motioned to me as they dreamed past me. Faces closed in on me until I started to suffocate in the wall, its softness sucking me in like some shagpile carpet. I heard alien

voices whispering "Julian Cope" and eyes would dart quickly towards me and then, just as quickly, dart away again.

Bates told me I was famous. Uh? I lurched ungainly back and gesticulated dramatically. Me? Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.

As I questioned the fame thing, I stared into another large room. On stage and reading from a lectern, Richard Jobson was a poet tonight. Fascinated to see a true Renaissance man in action, I stared from my bush-baby cling in the doorway.

Richard Jobson AKA Jobbo was in full form. Rich and sonorous, he played the post-punk McGonnigle with style. Through my mean snivelling hyper everything I was sickened and left the room.

Immediately, I was seized and gripped by Paul Morley from *NME*. He said something idiotic and my head spun and swirled and carried me faster and faster towards the stairs and out of the club, into the street and a taxi which took me far, far away from people and expectations.

I was woken from Batesy's doorstep a few hours later and put to bed. We had TV the next day. I didn't want to do TV. I wanted to get fucked up and rehearse. I wanted to be full of drive and sass, knocking out classics steadily. I didn't want to do TV.

I'd been away from home now since before we went to America. I had no clothes but the stage stuff and I was accumulating bullshit at Batesy's flat. Albums, books, trinkets and stuff.

I was getting hassled all the time, so we booked a house in the country. I wanted to record all the new songs and we would hire a mobile studio to do it.

The night before I left, I sat playing board games with Bates and Droyd. Droyd had some blotter acid, so we combined it with some Southern Comfort and grass. About 11 p.m., my brother rang me from Liverpool. A distant, distant voice from another star spoke bad words down the phone into my ears. Joss had read my lyric book, found Dorian's address, told Kathy and was now confronting me in the middle of a trip.

I copped right out for a while. I couldn't comprehend what was being implied. Then I told Joss anything he wanted to know because I felt so guilty. I told him I was off to Bear Shank Lodge in the middle of nowhere and put the phone down.

A second US tour was booked, but had been put forward. If Dorian met me in Texas, we would only be apart about nine weeks. I drove up to Northamptonshire in Bob Proctor's Chevrolet Camaro. The most starlike I'd felt, thus far, was arriving at the cool, cool Bear Shank Lodge in that car.

The farm was a paradise at the end of a long winding track bordered on two sides by enormous and beautiful yellow rape fields. It was five miles from a village called Oundle and the countryside was as flat as the Low Countries.

We were a group of sweet-tea drinking, fried-breakfast loving carnivores. We were served macrobiotic food and the phone had a lock on it. The guy was a dickhead and only gave in after a heavy and concerted push.

I rang Dorian every day with the credit card numbers and we rehearsed like mad. Journalists were also around. We got front covers all over, just from interviews in that place. It chilled the journalists out. They'd come up and we'd roll around together, and they'd go away loving me because I was friendly and interested in them. They had not yet realised that I was interested in everything.

We recorded the new songs. They were crap performances. Gary was way too out of it and I had no voice. It didn't matter too much. In fact, it was better in a way. If you do something good without thinking about it, you invariably find it impossible to recapture the first raw snarls.

The recording straightened me out for the direction of the second LP. We had already tried to record a song called 'Passionate Friend' but it was all over the place. A good song with no arrangement.

With no new single ready, Dave Bates chose to re-release 'Treason', a song over a year old. We remixed it and Bates and I did a deal. I wanted to change the album sleeve, dump the ugly tripping fools and replace it with

a simple image. Bates wanted to add 'Reward' to the album. That's cool. We did both.

The album got even bigger and 'Treason' stopped at no. 18 in the British chart. We did *Top of the Pops* and I was cute as hell.

At Bear Shank Lodge, I received a phone call from my father. "Hello, old son, we're bringing Kate down to see you."

They didn't want to do it, but they felt they had to make an effort. Kathy, or Kate as she now seemed to be known, was very close to my parents. She always came to them in emergencies.

I cleaned my act up for the Gloomy Sunday and checked that everyone else was cool. My parents drank tea while Kathy and I walked around. They left an hour later. It was all over. That was obvious.

The weeks away from Dorian crept on. The US tour was put back and I drifted into a maudlin haze out in the country.

In Rockfield, the Bunnymen had completed their second LP and were gaining ground. I'd spend weekends in the Columbia Hotel, which was becoming more and more rock'n'roll every day. Pam Young had informed The Human League and other Sheffield and Liverpool groups came down. The rules became less strict with every band who stayed there.

The Columbia was *our* hotel. It was the first post-punk hotel. You didn't have to step over heavy-metal groups or members of Buck's Fizz, because it was our thang.

The press was going crazy over The Teardrop Explodes. We were a two-hit group, yet we had more coverage than Adam & the Ants, who had hits every eight weeks. I was expected to write new singles every week. Eh, who can get *that* together? If we had a new release, all I worried about was getting a cool B-side together. You know, give people some other reason to buy the thing.

One week, the letters page in *Smash Hits* magazine was three quarters filled with Copey / Teardrop stuff. We were big. Publicly, we appeared far bigger than our sales or output. Journalists found out about my lax attitude

towards hygiene and the hedonistic debauched side they didn't want to be involved with but are fascinated by.

Time crept on. In the middle of 1981, when the press was still gripped by Cope-rophilia, we left for Texas. We'd rehearsed to a standstill and needed to get out of there. Britain is a closet when you want to be left alone.

LEWD DID I LIVE & EVIL I DID DWEL

I stood on the tarmac at Dallas Airport in full black leathers and mirrored shades. The temperature was 95 degrees, almost body heat. Taxiing down the runway, I had been determined to present my alien culture to these cowboys. For God's sake, we're in Texas. The place where my favourite group, The 13th floor Elevators, were escorted to shows by state troopers to stop them getting near drugs.

I wore force 11 sunscreen to retain my paleness and we drove around like dudes-supreme. We were picked up by weird women at our hotel. They drove Camaros, Thunderbirds and Corvettes, and were upfront about wanting to fuck us.

Our first show was under a freeway, on a stage with wire across the front, like the *Blues Brothers* movie. We got major league fucked up and strolled on to the stage. "Hi, we are The Teardrop Explodes from Liverpool, England."

I janged into the 'Layla Khaled...' riff on my new Fender electric 12-string and watched in delight as the audience, to a man, began to beat 10 shades of hit out of each other.

Behind my smile, my head observed these goings-on from a distance. The riff janged along and I felt no need to stop it or even interrupt its flow with a chorus. After a while, Alfie nudged me and I realised I should sing. The rest of the show was the same - about 250 people bottling each other. Troy timed our opening song at 17 minutes...

All these tanned sun-worshipping Texan dudettes hung out with us. One, a very cute one, asked me if I wanted a lift back in her Corvette. I was too fucked up to trust myself and was missing Dorian, so I declined.

Back at the hotel, women were all around. My little Corvette girl was there and I found her in my room. She wanted us to screw and do methadrine. I told her that was out of the question. She went into the bathroom, shot up the methadrine and lay there crying. I walked into Bob Proctor's room.

"Some girl's off her head in my room. Swap rooms, Bob. I can't handle that shit."

Dallas to Houston and on to Austin. One day, we arrived outside a hip record store. There were loads of people and we got to sign a guy's VW Beetle.

The scene was always the same. Bob Proctor sat in the front seat, driving. At his feet was his tour manager's case. It contained hash, grass, speed and any cocaine that Bob could get. I sat next to him, my leather legs up on the dashboard, wearing my mirror shades, like Peter Fonda in *Easy Rider*. Gary sat between us but behind. I refused to roll joints. I couldn't anyway, so they took it in turns.

Right at the back of the van Troy sat with a case of beers and Tequila. He got in the van every morning and got fucked up until he passed out. He never made sense but he was entertaining as hell.

Caught between the front and the back were Alfie and Jeff. They were both straight and easy to freak out.

As a heavy Bible reader, Jeff found Bob Proctor very hard to take. Bob would find the page that Jeff had finished at, tear the page out and roll a huge spliff with it. I liked that a lot. I was very into forcing my thing onto others at that time.

I kept control of the acid. I was paranoid if I didn't have any on my person. Gary and I were tripping every few days at this time. The enormous distances we had to drive were so new to us. You know, it's like driving up and down Britain over and over and over.

We'd get bored and play "Sock". Gary would sit in the middle of the seat with me on one side of him. I would put a sock over my head, climb out of the van window, over the roof and in through the other window. The only rule was that I was not allowed to fall off the van or I'd be killed.

We'd played this game in Britain before, but it was scarier in Texas because Bob Proctor drove so fast. I never got killed but it was a stupid game, you know.

While we played to between 100 and 250 people per night in Texas, we were getting bigger and bigger in Britain. I was still quite unaware of that. We were so removed from it all.

Bill Drummond could never be phoned and Bob Proctor was broke. We had no money for food after two weeks. One time, whilst we waited on Bill, Bob Proctor took Alfie's credit card to pay for our rooms. It was the only way we could get out of the hotel.

The rift between Alfie and Jeff and the rest of us was widening every day. They shared a room and we spent each and every day off our heads and hassling the shit out of them. We didn't care. By the time we got to Tucson, Arizona, Bob Proctor actually beat Alfie up before we went on stage.

The shows were totally inconsistent. I'd be brilliant one night and utter triple-dogshit the next. Or I'd pick just one girl and sing all the songs to her, and slag off her boyfriend.

We worked our way up the West Coast to Los Angeles. We did two shows at the Whisky-A-Go-Go. Awlright! We hung out in the dressing room and were bombarded with drugs and good wishes.

I took a small hit of acid and walked out on to the stage. All the great performers I was following on to that stage. Think about it. The Doors, The Seeds, Love, Janis Joplin, The 13th Floor Elevators, Tim Buckley...

My head spun and so I spun. I was a spinning-top in my leathers and matted blond mane. Between songs, I muttered and intoned, sometimes gibberish and sometimes great wisdom. Then I was off again, throwing myself on to the floor, falling into the audience and grinning, always grinning.

We had a new song, 'The Culture Bunker'. It was a comment on my meanness and inability to get off on the success of the Bunnymen and Liverpool in general. The open bitchiness of the song assuaged some of my guilt and the chorus refrain was aimed straight at Mac: "I feel cold when it turns to gold for you."

On stage, 'The Culture Bunker' was merciless. It dipped and swayed and finally dropped down and down and down, until there was just me grunting quietly into the microphone.

I sat on the floor in the far corner of the Whisky dressing room, away from the rest of the group and doing my own intense thing. The first show was over and there were girls at the stage door. I could hear West Coast voices saying, "But we have LSD for Julian," but Bob Proctor was having none of it.

I sat on my black leather jacket, hair and shirt plastered to my head. I didn't wear socks, so the leather of my boots was soaked and a fixture of my feet.

Troy swept up to me, a bottle of Tequila and a glass in his hand. His smile was manic and his eyes were glassy. "I think there's someone you should meet, baby."

The rugby scrum at the dressing room door kicked and shrieked with hip women and a few guys. Bob Proctor held them back with a constant stream of "Fuck offs" in his normal manner.

"Her name's Lydia Lunch. She wants to meet you."

I knew her name well. She played open wound music with her mouth and guitar in a group called Teenage Jesus. Yeah, I was totally into meeting her.

Troy walked back to get her. He returned with this fascinating woman in the tightest black dress, with bright red lips and a mane of black hair. She sat down right next to me and gazed right into my head. "Watching you on stage was like masturbation."

Wow, that was the heaviest line I'd ever been hit with. I smiled through the hallucinogenics and our eyes were caught in the same beam of light. We sat transfixed. Then she took my hand, guided me into the small guitar-tuning room and shagged the ass off me.

A street-musician skated by down Sunset Boulevard, wearing my T. E. Lawrence sheikh outfit. Across the street, a group of policemen ringed a

strange situation. It involved four guys on angel dust or some similar "size of an elephant" drug, pushing an enormous '70s Cadillac down the road, sideways.

After the show, we stayed at the Tropicana. I was sure I had the room where Sam Cooke was shot. There were bullet holes in the ceiling. But then I found out everyone else had bullet holes in *their* ceilings too.

Lydia left around 7 a.m. and we drove to San Francisco.

UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED

In San Francisco, we *were* a psychedelic group. All the older journalists came out to meet us. They said I wrote like Arthur Lee and championed us loudly.

I staggered around the streets, confused and happy and guilty at everything I did. I hung out on my own on Haight Street and bought loads of second-hand biographies.

My phone-calls with Dorian were so inconsistent. Sometimes I was charming. Other times, if Dorian said *anything* wrong, I would become silent and motionless and look straight ahead at the floor of my hotel room. I'd stare and stare until my eyes saw only directly in front of me, and darkness would cloud the edges, and a tunnel would form and I'd slip into a mood of total and inert psychosis.

I had all this blotter acid from Los Angeles and during an interview a middle aged woman called Sheila gave me a clear plastic bag full of "sherbet".

"It's pure California Crystal," she said. "A thousand trip bag. I live out on the rock and the Dead sent it for you."

We crossed the Golden Gate Bridge, out of San Francisco and on our way to Boulder, Colorado. It's a 1,200-mile journey. We had to do it in two days in our crappest of crap Dodge Ram van.

We resumed our positions and I cradled my 1,000-trip bag in my hands. It was the size of an ounce of rolling tobacco and clear.

Bob Proctor said we had to break the speed limit all the time, just to get to the show on time. Fuck it, I thought, let's make this an epic of epic journeys.

I evaluated my situation. I had seven trips in either blotter or tablet form. It was around noon. I had two days of intense hell ahead of me. Better take them all.

I scooped up the blotters. They were between an eighth and a quarter of an inch in size. They had colour cartoons of Disney characters printed on them and I took all seven of them with a swig of beer.

Gary looked at me, his air of resignation to the fore. If I was going to be in a state, he figured he should fuck up too. I took his forefinger in my hand and dipped it lightly into the bag of crystal.

"Lick your finger, Gary. Right, that's one trip. Okay?"

Gary stuck his finger in the packet five more times. Right, it's like that, is it? Over the next half hour, I added eight more fingerfuls of crystal acid to my dose of seven blotters.

Nothing happened quickly. Alfie and Jeff looked apprehensive, but I settled down to read at the front of the van. I had bought the autobiography of Blaze Starr for 25c on Geary Street in San Francisco. She was a stripper, but I mainly loved her name.

The coastal breezes were soon far behind. The hills gave way until, through the intense heat and the haze, we were over the state line and into Nevada.

"Ay, fuckin' shuddup, will yer?" Bob Proctor asked for the tenth time.

"Sorry, Robert." I had started to make truck noises as the trip came on. Errrrrr Urrrrrr ... It was hard to stop, especially when someone kept asking me.

I looked up. A VW Beetle was travelling towards us down the highway, about two feet above the ground.

"Alfie, look. Look, Alfie. Look, look, look! Looook." He looked. The Beetle passed. "So what?"

So what? I couldn't believe it. The single most amazing thing in my life, thus far, and Alfie doesn't care. Suck thine shit and then suck mine, Alfredo.

And then it happened. My 15 trips came on. I looked at Gary. "Faaaaaaar Ouuuuuut! Garfield, you're the bloody family dog."

I sat bolt upright. He was too. Sitting between Bob Proctor and myself, Gary Dwyer sat, paws 'n' all, as canine now as he had been feline in Rockfield. He stuck out his long wet tongue at me and panted.

I brushed my filthy matted hair luxuriously by the open passenger window. It streamed out behind me, the wind from the enormous open gash buffeting and massaging me. I was huge. I was totally huge. My breathing was strong and virile. I looked around at everyone, my nostrils flared and equine. I felt Godlike and beautiful. Huh, I'm Mercury and you can all fuck off.

With the temperature around 100 degrees, we were not yet fully into the desert. The towns became fewer and fewer and soon we alone raced across the vast and giant white sand, like a tiny slot-car, across Nevada.

Occasionally, a convoy of chromed and shining Peterbuilt and Kenworth trucks would appear, endless miles in front of us. We would catch them up in minutes, sometimes trapped behind their vapour trails, then dip and sway before vrooming past them. I stared transfixed at their tiny rollerskate wheels fighting to support the enormous weight thundering through the dazzle and the heat.

Troy Tate stood, sagging and with great effort, at the edge of a Nevada truckpark, a beer in one hand and a brace of iced imported lagers in the other. We were filling up with petrol at one of the zillion 76 truckstops on these highways.

We had eaten our fill at a roadside diner called Middle of Nowhere outside Cold Springs, Nevada, then danced with a couple of old guys. Before we left, I'd helped the waitress's son with his homework and she had given us all sun-hats with the placename on it.

Now it was midnight and the frying pan that was the van roof had begun to cool slightly. Gary and I stood, vacantly and immobile, at the gleaming and spotless all-night coke-machine, looking out into the mountains.

We ambled slowly over to Troy at the far edge of the truck park, my hearing too acute in the sibilance and the treble of the jetblack and insect-laden night.

This place. This place and this frame of mind. I was solid and separate from everything. The road went on forever. And these roads. They weren't even real roads. Nature threatened to reclaim them at any minute. Like an elastic band stretched round a tennis ball, it felt as though I could cut through them with a gigantic razor blade and send them spinning off into space.

Bob Proctor rounded us up and packed us back into the van. I had bought a family pack of marshmallows. A huge $3 bag and nothing else. The others had bought quite sensibly and I looked longingly, trying pathetic attempts to do swaps. A marshmallow for a Hershey bar? No way. A marshmallow for a can of coke? Fuck right off.

As we pulled into the hotel for the night, the acid was hotter and clearer than ever. It was 3.30 a.m. We had been travelling for 16 hours. And I had spent the last hour pressing white and pink marshmallows, alternately, into the ceiling of the van. They stood out like huge candy rivets in patterns along the roof panels.

Bob Proctor told us to stay in the van whilst he checked in. Eh, we thought. It's cool to leave the van. We staggered, crazed and slobbering, into reception.

It was a cowboy town. Behind the reception was a casino and the carpets were deep pile red. Like raging bulls, we were sucked towards the dynamite red.

Around us, a Western movie was unfolding. I could not believe it was real. I could not believe that the town sheriff was gambling only about five feet from me. And he wore the most enormous hat. A gigantic stetson. It was white, a creamy white which reminded me of coagulating milk. As I was drawn into the thick of the casino, Bob Proctor jerked me back hard.

"You bloody dickhead. Are you off yer bloody head? We're not in Liverpool now, yer clown. They'll kill us if yer pull any shit."

"B-but this is for *us*, Bob. The sheriff's wearing his best *hat,* for God's sake."

I just couldn't believe that this was normal. My brain seethed with ideas, but Bob Proctor had made me paranoid. I grabbed the key and fled upstairs with Gary.

That night, sleep would be impossible. What are we stopping for, anyway? We could drive forever. Huh, bloody Alfie and Jeff need to sleep.

I consoled myself in endless baths, but Gary was restless. Finally, he hauled me out of the bathroom. It was 5.30 a.m. and we had been awake for over 19 hours. We couldn't tell. We were fuelled and ready to go.

There was no room service and nothing to do. We watched some repeats on TV but Gary had to go out. As the sun came up, we both took just a couple more hits of the crystal and set off to walk around the town.

It was six hours later, around mid-morning, when we pulled up at a desert store, full of cowboy boots, moccasins and far-out regalia. We had seen large signs announcing the place alongside the highway for about 50 miles.

I drooled over a pair of tan suede Indian boots. I paid $15 for them, then spent the next hour cutting all the fringes off.

We crossed into Utah and soon Nevada was left way behind. Gary and I lolled comatose and vacant in the two front passenger seats. I was nowhere. I'd been strung out right across the journey, a part of me still in San Francisco, the rest littered at regular intervals across the desert. The accumulation of the trips, the weeks of little sleep and the situation with my marriage, all this and travelling across America in a van, were beginning to take their toll. Eh, I thought. People do this shit for years. Don't wimp out now, you plank. You've got a show tomorrow night.

Bob Proctor still had a lot of cocaine left over from San Francisco. Normally, he and Troy were the only takers, but today, we stopped at a roadside diner and had a few lines each.

Cocaine isn't a nice drug. It's a bullshitter and that's a fact. But I needed to straighten up. The LSD was so much a part of me that I could only just hear my natural mind, raging away down some lost tunnel, screaming, "Remember me, remember me."

The highway through Utah was like some sunbaked open coalfield in South Wales. The sand was grey by the sides of the road and we travelled for mile upon mile alongside dusty freight trains and open -haulers. The railway lines were parallel with the highway for ages at a time, then they would suddenly shoot off.

My pal, the freight train, would then ride about a mile away before snaking back to the road and we would remain, side by side, cutting through the desert together.

We had maintained an impressive average speed on the journey. Bob Proctor had figured that we had to break the speed limit by 20-25 mph for most of the time, just to give us space to eat. But every day we fell a little behind.

We caught up with a convoy of trucks belching smoke, crawling along and in no hurry to let us past. Gary and I screamed out, "Overtake, overtake, overtake." Bob checked his CB radio, but there was nothing happening. He tried to pass a couple of times but the oncoming traffic was just frequent enough to make it difficult. Then, he suddenly pulled out. To the *right!*

We raced down the hard shoulder on the inside of the convoy, the sand and the dust pouring into the open windows. We choked and cackled as we bounced around inside the van.

Yeah, yeah. Past the first container wagon, awlright. Past the second container, awlright, on and on and on, past the seventh container wagon and ... right past the patrol car which had obviously been the reason for the convoy's delicate speed.

As the patrolman strode towards us, Bob Proctor fumbled his briefcase out of sight. It contained my 1,000-trip bag, a large bag of grass, the San Francisco cocaine and all the tour receipts.

Be normal, I thought. Concentrate.

"This is fuckin' Utah, right?" snarled Bob Proctor. "They lock you up, you pull any shit."

Normal, normal, normal. I sat looking gleefully and psychotically normal, trying to understand the seriousness of the situation.

"You realise you were doing 83 miles per hour, sir?" The patrolman looked stupendous. So law-enforcing that I had a problem not complimenting him. I beamed at him. Hope I look okay, yeah, I'm cool.

"Yeah, sorry about that. We've gorra get to Boulder dead soon."

Bob's Liverpudlian twang interested the guy, but we weren't getting off completely. He told us that overtaking on the inside on dirt at 83 mph was dangerous to other people and us as well. Yeah, we know, dead sorry, etc., etc., etc.

He fined us on the spot, then we had to follow him to the nearest post office. He couldn't take our money. He had to watch us post it to the king of fines.

And we were off. No arrests, nothing. I got severely booed for being over friendly, but what's new?

The Salt Lake City signs became more frequent. One said 225 miles, then 130 miles, then out of nowhere I caught the glint of something golden on the horizon. In just a couple of miles, the dust grey earth became green and lush like the English countryside. The glint came from the dome of the capital building. Each US state capital has a dome. The Mormon state capital in Salt Lake City has a golden dome. It figures.

The unreal and spiritual building reached out to me but in an instant we were gone. I had only seconds to think of Brigham Young, Donny and the guys, and we were leaving this green and idyllic oasis far behind.

Bone-weary, brain-weary and utterly fucked, we entered the state of Colorado. Are we there yet? Are we near? No, we're not even close. The day was coming to an end. No way would we get to sleep in Boulder tonight. Shit, another half-day of travelling tomorrow.

Troy had collapsed in the very back seat, his system totally caned by the weight of beer and the intensity of spirits. Jeff and Alfie were hunched up together, their hellish journey still in full flight.

In the front seat Gary and I kept Bob Proctor alert. He'd driven thousands of miles since our arrival in Dallas and was more psychotic than anyone.

I was starving. Let's stop, man. We waited for a diner, a truckstop or some such to appear, but nothing did. There was no food in the van, not anything. Sweet-wrappers and tobacco and trails of two weeks driving littered the floor. In my haze, it looked wonderful. I searched on my hands and knees for a morsel, but to no avail.

The night wore on and the temperature plummeted. I put my feet up on the dashboard and lay back. My eyes caught a feast, a complete feast. On the ceiling, petrified from the heat and filthy from the dust, were the pink and white marshmallows that I'd so carefully stored two days before.

I pulled them off the ceiling, one at a time, like a farmer picking fruit, and hungrily chewed them up. Gary was revolted, but soon he was eating too.

Around 3.30 a.m. we pulled into a tiny town called Dinosaur, checked in and fell into oblivion. For Gary and me, even the acid could not halt our crushing and inevitable slumber.

"Now look, Pam. Yer've gotta find him now!"

Bob Proctor and I stood at the only pay-phone in Dinosaur, Colorado. We were broke again, to-*tally* skint. We had $17 between us after we had paid the $55 for the rooms. Bill Drummond was not in Liverpool and Pam Young couldn't seem to clear any money for us.

I wasn't concerned, though. The trip was still in full swing and I was only interested in one thing, a huge church-sized fibre-glass Brontosaurus that stood in the middle of this dust-bowl of shacks and roadside diners. How had we missed this thing last night?

I wandered back to the motel, still transfixed by the fake dinosaur, and topped up the trip with a couple more fingerfuls of the crystal. The motel was three long domestic trailer caravans and a reception hut. We had booked the entire place for $55!

An hour or so later, we were back on the highway with the promise of money soon. The shape of the Colorado countryside had changed entirely.

We climbed high up into the Rocky Mountains, on and on around winding treacherous passes. The hours passed and I fell into my first real sleep for days. I slept, fitfully and hunched, in the front of the van up to the very top and, after hours and hours, I felt us begin to make the descent into Boulder.

That night, The Teardrop Explodes played a very unartistic and average show. I wore my new suede Indian boots to make me feel good, but I was truly gone. All spent.

SAME INITIALS AS CHRIST

"A night on fire put out all traces of feeling."

'The Great Dominions'

On and on and up and round the US map we rode. Danger on all sides, but mainly danger from our load. Each show saw a new side to The Teardrop Explodes, until we bore little resemblance to the group which started the tour.

In Denver, Colorado, we made a personal appearance at Waxtrax Records. Three people came. The owner was embarrassed for us and I left with shitloads of free albums. Gifts of guilt.

That night we played to a bar full of Midwest punks. By the middle of the set they had left in disgust, to be replaced by the Deadheads and yippies at the back.

I guess we disappointed a lot of people. They came to see a post-punk beat group and got Buffalo Springfield. I had long sun-bleached hair, a tan suede outfit and a Gibson electric 12-string guitar. The songs went on forever, littered with personal put-downs and insults for the audience.

The 1,000-trip bag was regularly attended to as we peeled away the miles upon endless miles. Out of Colorado, through Lawrence, Kansas, where our dressing room was actually *next* to William Burroughs' headquarters. (Gary and I broke in to search, unsuccessfully, for the original manuscript of *Queer*, his then unpublished and notorious classic.)

In Chicago, the entire PA broke down as 'Kilimanjaro', our intro music, was playing. I wandered on and played a couple of acoustic songs, fuelled by the club owner's uncut and wonderful cocaine.

The rest of them learned to improvise on one chord during my more and more frequent escapades on and around the stage. I explained that they could do what they liked, so long as it was always on one riff. No clever stuff. No blues. And no solos.

In Detroit, the crew and PA arrived on time, whilst we were late waking up. We broke down 200 miles from the gig. The police helped us, the AAA helped us. The van was just fucked. We'd bought it from Bob Proctor's mate in New Jersey. It was a piece of shite. Gary and Troy and I got completely fucked up at the side of the road. "There'll be no gig tonight." And what do you know? We made it. With minutes to spare, we arrived at the stage door. The house manager said it was too late to start any show. I agreed. I didn't care and I was too crazy to sing. Bob said we had to play or we'd forfeit our money. So we piled on stage and played, oblivious to everything.

The Canadian border at Windsor Bridge is a very heavy crossing. The authorities know what's going on. Everyone does their huge accumulation of American drugs down the road, in Detroit, then travels through the border, wired, amped, skulled and generally with a hell of an attitude.

On the back of our crew-truck, behind the Detroit club, we set up a frenzied chemical picnic. I yelled and screamed but Bob Proctor insisted that I dump my beloved 1,000-trip bag. There was no way we could keep *anything*.

By the early hours of next morning, we passed into Canada, our mouths forced into amphetamine smiles and our lips chewed and red raw. We checked into the Toronto Sheraton at 8 a.m. and sank into oblivion.

Of all the staff writers at *NME*, Adrian Thrills was the most reasonable. That was the only thing about him that I didn't like. He was small and skinny with a Mod-head full of ideas of how things should be. As one of the early champions of The Teardrop Explodes, Adrian was concerned that we were becoming a bunch of cocooned acidheads of state. He was right, I guess, but I'd recently realised that I had the same initials as Jesus Christ, and that changed everything. No more apologising for *this* dude.

Late afternoon, around six, I got a call. It's Adrian Thrills. He's been waiting for you all day. Sorry, I didn't even know he was in Toronto.

I arose into the chaos of our room. Gary had been farting like a bastard all night. My clothes were all heaped together in one damp wedge of solidifying matter. You remember finding filthy week-old sportsgear at the

bottom of your bag when you were at school? Well, that was my clothes. The whole room stank of damp, shit, stale tobacco and old fruit, the only thing available to eat when we arrived.

I wanted to make at least a reasonable impression on Adrian, but that was ruined when he knocked on our hotel-room door, unexpectedly. I had just taken a bath. To piss Gary off, I'd locked the door from inside and closed it behind me as I left. Adrian's first introduction to the tour was watching Gary punching and kicking a hole in the bathroom wall. I made vague explanations and we went down to the club.

I think we were shit that night. We did two sets; one was unremarkable and one sucked big logs. I rang Dorian from a stupidly unattended telephone and missed her more and more as our separation drew to a close.

Out of Canada and down into New York State we came. I never understood how big it was. New York State stretches from way up at the Canadian border halfway down the eastern seaboard.

Adrian Thrills was with us all the way. I didn't want him there. I liked the guy and didn't want him to see us cracking up. I had this couplet spinning round in my head. It went:

> "I'm a Turner sky and I look from above.
>
> It's alright for now, but how do I get down?"

WE TALKED FOR HOURS, EXCEPT FOR THE FAINTING

And so we arrived in Albany, New York State's capital, 150 miles north of New York City and the place of my first visitation from Dorian, 13 weeks before.

For this reason and also because of the lack of pressure at such a small gig, Dorian and I had decided to rendezvous here for a second time. I had a night off and, maybe, time to decide whether this was real or puppy love. But I was worried in case I blew my first meeting with Dorian in three months.

I was sitting in the Howard Johnson's residents' bar. I wore jeans and my leather camo belt, a white T-shirt and these terrible scummy grey suede boots that I got in Toronto for $3. I had washed and aired my filth and sweat ingrained clothes in honour of Dorian's arrival.

What if I didn't fancy her? Or what if we've got nothing to say? Or maybe it was only a holiday romance. Shit. I worried and worried until I realised I just had to wait. The hours passed and I began to wonder if she would come at all.

And then, from my place at the bar, I saw the most beautiful vision. She was standing in the hotel foyer and wore an exquisite and very old off-white chiffon strapless dress. It had delicate red leaf patterns and an enormous red taffeta bow around the waist. Her wide crinoline underskirt accentuated her gorgeous shapely legs. She wore red high-heels and her black lacquered and crazy hair fell over her eyes.

I knew she was Dorian immediately. I just had this problem accepting that she was here for me. This was the woman I'd been rude to on the telephone so many times? I strode up to her.

Shit, man, she's incredible. We stared at each other from about four inches away, just like a dog sniffing around some long-lost pal. I found it all vague and unbelievable.

I took her hand and we walked outside and up the steps to my room on the balcony. We locked ourselves in there, pushed the two double-mattresses on to the floor and made love all night.

Pressure on. No matter how much I tried, I couldn't help feeling that this wouldn't work. The odds were so totally against it. I started a fight during the night. "I can't sleep in such a confined space." Bullshit. It was more space than I *ever* had.

Gradually, I eased myself into this new and all-important situation.

It was the next morning. Dorian and I ate breakfast and drove into Albany's centre. This was the stuff I had dreamed about doing. You know, the real little unimportant shit. It seems like you yearn more and more for this stuff if your life becomes extreme.

I get so pissed off when dickhead rock'n'roll artists pretend to be angst ridden and fucked up all the time. Don't you know how rude it is, you planks? Falling for the artist trip is the most dumb-ass thing ever. It proves you're a hollow shell. Being off my head around the world was a small consolation. I wished every minute for peace and simplicity.

We flicked through the record racks in some collector's shop. Dorian bought me an original copy of the first 13th Floor Elevators LP. A prize! We hung out and made our way, slowly, back to the motel.

Kid Gambino, our sound guy, had been with us since our last US tour in early March. Everyone had commented on how particularly crap he was. Of course, I really dug him, so no-one could get rid of the dude. Walking out of my Howard Johnson's motel room, I noticed Dave Bates, my A&R man, with a weird-faced guy. He had long black hair and a hooked nose. Bob Proctor told me he was the new sound man. Gambino's out.

What? How fucking rude. No way! We got to the soundcheck and I freaked out at the idea of someone being foisted upon me. Kid Gambino sucked up to me and tried to persuade me to keep him. I didn't care about that. I was just pissed off at not being asked.

I ignored everyone and left. It brought me right down. I sat in my room and just glowered. My moods were becoming increasingly twisted.

I always wanted emotions to hit at precisely the right moment. If someone turned up unexpectedly or left without warning, I was a real mess. A stupid self-obsessed dickhead.

"Er and um and um, er and um and um, this is serious, this is serious, this is serious. Er and um and um, er and um and um, this is serious, this is serious..."

We were stuck in the elliptical and timeless riff of a song called 'Poppies in the Field'. Ranting away, I'd been caught in this falling-leaf pattern before. No-one ever dared to stop me since Balfe left and now I was pissed off as all hell.

The Gambino affair was well worth spoiling an entire show for. Especially as we'd played a brilliant set in Albany only three months previously.

That night, Bates stayed away from me. Dorian was scared to put a foot wrong in case I told her to go home. Everyone was on edge.

We left for Philadelphia the next day. I told Dorian I'd see her in New York. Far from Britain and so far into the tour, nothing made sense.

I'm in love with a girl who has the most dresses and shoes in the world. She knows *nothing at all* about love and I have a wife at home who's freaking out.

I veered between total guilt and complete rage at the situation. I consoled myself in the sheer *chaos* of LSD and found that it prevented me from lashing out too much. Instead, I was looking inwards for some sense of peace.

I would walk my mind down a long corridor away from my eyes. The world outside was drifting away and away until it was a ship going over the horizon and a black tunnel would appear around my world, whereupon I would slip into a mood of total inert psychosis.

Meanwhile, our New York show was a stupid and mistaken "double-bill" with U2 at the Palladium in Lower Manhattan. In Liverpool, we thought that U2 were a bad joke, a record company's idea of a northern group. They talked of passion as though it was their exclusive right. Ho-hum.

Down the eastern seaboard, U2 had sent the Teardrop messages. The final one was a tape of Sparks' old 45 'This Town Ain't Big Enough for Both of Us'. I really dug that. Maybe Bone-head and Co. weren't Bad Company after all.

Double-bill, huh? We went on first, did really well and left. I'd seen U2 in the soundcheck. Led Zep, man. Uncool. But they were dead sweet and a bit younger than us, so we gave them some leeway. They weren't gonna do *shit* anyway. To quote Gary Dwyer, U2 were really called the Hope Brothers. "'Cause they've got two hopes of making it: Bob Hope and no hope."

In Britain, my absence was contributing to our ever-increasing size. The little girls could only see my pictures and the rumours were still coming only in dribs and drabs. Had they been able to smell me or hear the new songs, then the bubble would have burst immediately.

And so we left these verdant pastures and great new world of possibilities. Yes, it was time to face the brutal old world with its real problems and its tight reins, close fitting and cutting hard into my expanding skin. No leeway and no forgiveness.

Between the Devil and the deep blue sea.

Between post-punk and absolution.

MY FIRST NAME IS PLANCIS, BUT YOU CAN CALL ME PLANK

Back to the purgatory of Britain for the summer. Oh, fun, fun, fun. I can be a pop singer, ho-hum.

In London, I couldn't even enjoy a stoned day in the park. I was constantly recognised by 11 year olds out with their parents. Room 311 at the Columbia Hotel was my home, my refuge and my inspiration. I moved all the unnecessary furniture into the corridor, brought posters, tapes and a guitar into the room, and slept on my great-grandmother's 90-year-old quilt.

Summer '81 was the first heyday of the Columbia as a rock'n'roll hotel. Musicians who hated it were just bitter because they thought they were late on the bandwagon. But this scene, disparate as it was, needed some place that was a reaction to the old -style chrome and deco palaces that charged £150 per night to shit like Thin Lizzy and the Geezer fraternity. In the Columbia, Soft Cell, Cabaret Voltaire, Heaven 17 and the like talked to the Bunnymen, The Wild Swans, The Pale Fountains. The only cool old dudes were Slade, whom everyone loved in any case.

"Meester Julee, he never leave heez room ... He like the smoke, you know." Francisco, the bartender, was there every night giving me a good rap to people.

Troy Tate, still a resident of London, would drink his evenings into oblivion, the link between the Sheffield and Liverpool camps.

One evening, I'd been on a radio review programme called *Roundtable*. I'd danced and fallen off tables in the control room, screaming and laughing throughout the show. Then I called The Human League single "kack" and got out of control and got banned.

You know, you get asked to do shit TV and they get surprised when you fuck up. I mean, just simple psychology would tell you not to ask people like us to do it. Like, say, Adam Ant was around and really good at his thing. So people like that should do the shit because they do it well. I didn't even care about the stuff, so it's hard to take it seriously. What record companies never sussed was that if I'm forced to do something

through circumstances, as soon as I come out the other side, I'll fuck them royally up the ass.

That's not a threat. I don't feel proud of that. It's just in me and I've got to do it to stay alive and feel that I exist.

We started our first tour of Britain since our hit singles. In America, we were still just culty as hell. I was used to drugged women and psychedelic heads. Suddenly, I was confronted with innocence. My natural reaction was one of revulsion. My brief confrontation as a trainee teacher with five and six year olds in Liverpool had reminded me to ignore anyone still at school.

We walked out for the first show and I freaked. Yukk! What a total right-off drag. Stupid lickle teeny girls a-fussing and a-fainting and a-paying no heed to the single-mindedness of our one-chord space-grooves.

Alfie bopped like a dude born to be uncool. He was the Personification of New-Wave Man. Girls held up banners. I saw one that said "ALFIE!" Soon, that one seemed like hundreds. What were we becoming?

I took more of everything to help me get through this obnoxious and cissified routine. Psychologically, I felt compelled to remain dirty, no, get dirtier, yeah, be filthy. It was the middle of summer '81. I wore only my leathers and refused to change them. They were the symbol of the fame I was so detesting but I thought, fuck everyone, I'll be way beyond all of them. I'd think gross thoughts. I wanted to run up to little girls. Give them my autograph. Force it on them, you know.

"Here you are, stupid asshole girl. You don't know me but you'll want it anyway."

Halfway through the tour, the Nottingham show was a chaotic teeny affair. I could feel all the long mac brigade retreating to the back of the hall. We played the hits and the big radio songs from the album and they went crazy. We played stuff off the forthcoming album and they went crazy. I couldn't faze them at all. They loved it. I was on some great metaphysical acid trip. The direct descendant of John Donne, T. S. Eliot, Jim Morrison and Patti Smith. Boy, I must have been fooling someone. I was bloody Peter Noone.

The Nottingham audience got more teary and disgusting. I called to them, "You little bitches can piss your lickle panties ..." I railed on about their stupid parents waiting in the stupid cars outside for them. And how they wanted to fuck me and how they didn't have the attention span of a butterfly and all this miserable stuff that they hadn't come to hear, and Duran Duran didn't do this unprofessional stuff, did they?

John Taylor, from Duran, said in *Smash Hits* that summer that their only competition was from The Teardrop Explodes, "If Julian Cope can keep it together." Yeah, *no* problem. I had the audience. Now, I just needed to convert thousands of pre-teens into doubtful understanding followers. I just needed faith and an attitude.

David Bates, A&R man and one-time friend, got up from the dressing-room floor. I rushed out of the room and down the stairs of the Coventry Odeon, Droyd in pursuit...

Bates had arrived at the soundcheck with a new Teardrop single. One that I'd not even been consulted about. They had edited it and released it with my manager Bill Drummond's permission. The song, 'Ha Ha, I'm Drowning', was the *fourth* single from the *Kilimanjaro* album. That was way too much. Now Bates was telling me for the first time. Well, fuck that. I had knocked Bates to the floor and was now fleeing to the stage with Droyd in pursuit. He told me Bates was dead upset and knew it was a bad thing.

"Listen, man. He brought you to placate me. Batesy is record company. He's just proved it."

Bob Proctor was totally into the skirmish. He drove me to my parents' house in Tamworth. It was only about 15 miles away. I said I would stay there until Phonogram Records withdrew all the copies of 'Ha Ha, I'm Drowning'.

Bill Drummond hounded me at my parents' house. He said it was just hurting my career. Bullshit. My career is nothing when a gesture has to be made. We can always reschedule the shows.

After two days, I had lunch with the managing director of Phonogram. He was really nice. He acquiesced and agreed. He also told me that the single

had entered the chart at 66 with only three days' sales. I said I was sorry. It was a principles thing.

Soon we were back in London. We played a dreadful show at the Hammersmith Odeon, mainly through my hang ups, and Gary and I were back at our favourite hotel. The Columbia had no room service and a shit phone service. The rooms were boxes with badly put together unit furniture and floral wall paper. It was cheap as hell and they brought the rates down if you stayed all night.

I'd been back at the Columbia about a month, ringing Dorian every night and running up massive bills, when I got a call from the guy on the front desk.

"Julian? 'Allo. Listen, you know you call America all the time?"

I listened intently. He had a proposition to make. If I gave him a fiver for each call, he wouldn't list any of them. I said that was cool. For as long as that guy worked there, I got cheap international rates.

It came at exactly the right time, as well. I had to be careful with the fake credit card numbers. I stopped using them for a while when they caught on to me.

Midsummer, I took some time off to write songs. Bates and I made up and he told me that I could use the flat while he was away. I phoned Dorian and got her to fly over within the week.

A flat and a month together would give us a real chance.

CHRIST V WARHOL

It was high summer and sticky heat as I packed Dorian and her umpteen suitcases into the taxi at Heathrow Airport's Terminal 3. We sped along through the outskirts of London and got caught in the traffic at Hammersmith.

In the back seat, we couldn't believe it. She was here. She felt unreal to my touch. Each time we met, I had to relearn her body and her head. At last, we had space and time to ourselves.

Bates' flat was now home to me. Each night I took the sheets and made up my bed on the couch in the front room. We had a routine. Droyd would skin up a final joint and I'd make the last tea of the night. Bates was exempt as it was his house and he was doing shitloads anyway. Now I was with Dorian in Bates' flat.

I love that speedy feeling that you get when you meet someone at an airport off an early flight. You intend to go to sleep early but it inevitably becomes 2 a.m. and you're not even sleepy. Waking up at 6 a.m. and running on pure and ugly adrenalin, your body is soon travelling out of the city and through the suburbs, watching commuters still scrambling for breakfast in their houses overlooking the railway line. By the time you pick up your friend, you feel jet-lagged yourself in a weird kind of way. Back home by late morning and already you've done a day's living.

I carried Dorian into the main bedroom and plopped her on to the bed. She felt so new, so brand new. Wow. I thought these were the women you never get to touch. I'd been with pretty girls before, but it seemed to me this was different. She had so much sexuality oozing out that it took my breath away. And the most outrageous underwear.

I pulled gently at the clasp on her belt and removed her dress, then we lay down and tripped out over the beauty of each other. I felt as worshipped as she did. This total piece of amazing ass with the brains of my weirdest friends all wrapped up in acres of the sexiest material and the palest, milkiest, most female shape this lickle planet did know.

We cavorted for hours. It felt like no-time and no-place.

It was the next morning. I had introduced Dorian to Droyd and we lay around Bates' bedroom, smoking weed and listening to psychedelia.

Droyd and I took Dorian out to breakfast at the Sunshine Cafe on Lisson Grove. It was about 20 yards away and as we left I bought a selection of British chocolate. I piled her up with Toffee Crisps, Cadbury's Caramels, Curly Wurlys and Yorkies. These things are so rich compared with American candy. American chocolate is shit. It's all chocolate-flavoured candy, man. Hershey bars? Candy. Mr Goodbar? Candy. There's a load of great American traditions, but believe me, the sweets suck.

Back at the Lisson Grove flat, we listened to the first Pink Floyd LP. I hadn't played it for months and now it was sounding great. When we reached a song called 'Lucifer Sam', I just played it and played it and played it. There's something about the way that Syd Barrett sings, "But that cat's something I can't explain ..." and the guitar riff, which is disjointed and snaky. Barrett. He was looooose.

That evening, I told Dorian and Droyd that we were going out. It was weird for Dorian as Patty was in London hanging out with Killing Joke. They had grown apart after we had met. Before that time, they were inseparable, but Patty had developed a kind of "crush" on me that forced them both apart.

Around six in the evening, we dropped a tab of acid each. I knew that Dorian was still exhausted from the jet-lag, but I thought what the hell.

For some inexplicable reason, we arrived at the Venue, a shithole of vaguely gigantic proportions. As the trips began to take effect, I heard a tannoy announcement from what seemed like 2,000 miles away.

"Wow, I think The Television Personalities will be on soon."

Neither Droyd nor Dorian had heard the announcement, so they both thought I was the oracle when, sure enough, The TV Personalities trooped onstage.

My breathing became forced and deliberate. I watched the group on stage but I was not calm. They had a monkey playing the drums. A monkey in a

cage. I must be mistaken, I'm tripping and that doesn't happen at the Venue. Still, they *are* The TV Personalities so they can do what they like.

Dorian was getting younger and younger all the time when something happened that almost sent her back to the womb: the group began to play 'Lucifer Sam' by Pink Floyd. No. Is that weird? Is this a weird thing to be happening? I asked Droyd. He didn't think so really. I asked people around me, but they were too intrigued to see Julian Cope on acid to answer the question.

Dorian thought that it was way too weird and began to cry. She said they had control of our minds and that really scared me. I looked over to Droyd and screamed, "Is she okay?"

Droyd stared at the dishevelled and miserable little girl. Her make-up was all over her face and she was crying uncontrollably. It was deafening in the place.

"Yeah, I think she's fine," he said, smiling blandly.

Oh, that's good. I felt pleased that Droyd was in charge and appeared to know what was going on. It *was* weird. Of all the songs they could play in the whole world, of all the unusual cover-versions, they pick that one. Still, in a way it fitted together so well that we couldn't question it for too long.

"Yeah, and wouldn't it be cool if Patty turned up?"

"Don't *say* that. It would be too much," squirmed Dorian. Her head was lifting off at the very thought and already I was putting her through too much. I forgot that she was younger and stuff. You know, you put your woman through your trip and expect her to take to it.

I walked to the men's room. It took a period of minutes, as I was easily diverted. Women would call "Julian?" and I'd think that I knew them and spend ages staring at their faces, looking for some kind of recognition. Once I discovered that they only knew me from The Teardrop Explodes, I would carry on towards the toilets, only to be stopped again 10 seconds later.

In the toilets, I couldn't tell if I was peeing or not. Had I pissed myself? Was I stinky? There were guys looking at me doing my loopy thang. Were they looking because I was acting weird? Did they recognise me? I realised that I didn't give a shit and that made me feel better.

Eventually, I remembered where I was. There was a club outside. You didn't come here to stay in the men's room. Hmm, I'd better leave.

I strode purposefully into the chaos and rage of the club. I saw Tom Bailey, the singer from The Thompson Twins, and we talked just long enough to be aware that I was making no sense. I made my way past the bar and a guy threw a pint of beer over me. Hey, that felt gooood.

I carried on walking, but a voice of normality tugged away at my senses. Way back in my head, I sensed that throwing beer over someone was not a friendly act. I figured I'd better go back and question the guy about his actions.

"Er, excuse me. Are you the guy who just threw beer over me?"

"Yeah. Wanna make something of it?"

"Er, I just wanted to know one thing. Was it meant in a heavy way? You know, are you being *heavy* towards me? I have to ask you 'cause I'm tripping and I don't know you."

The dude looked bemused. He stared to see if I was joking. As I stood, distant and unaware, I'm sure he realised I was for real, and that totally threw him.

"Yeah, well ... You kicked Mick Finkler out of the group, didn't you?"

I reached for my past but fumbled it badly. I was just about to say I remembered Mick well, but I checked myself as I sensed that it would go down badly. Especially as he'd still been out of the group for only one year. God, it seemed like forever ago.

"Erm ... Mick? He ... he was ..."

I drifted again, as my eyes lit on the rows of spirits behind the bar. They shone in thick syrupy translucent greens and ambers. Oh God, they looked

sooo beautiful.

"Yeah. He ... couldn't write ... songs and wouldn't let me write stuff on my own so eventually I got pissed off and threw him out. I gave him loads of chances but it was a group decision 'cause we had to ..." My voice trailed away.

That was enough for my beer-chucker. He was okay, now. We started some kind of dislocated conversation. His name was Wally and he claimed to have been a founder of the Sex Pistols, even though he looked more like a heavy Elvis Costello.

I started to walk back to Dorian and Droyd when I bumped into Patty. She looked great.

"Wow. I told Dorian we'd see you here. Coool."

Patty was freaked out. "Dorian's here?"

I walked her over to our table and Dorian shit. They hugged and it was weird and emotional. Droyd smiled blandly at everyone and figured everything was going fine.

Dorian explained that we were tripping.

"Shit, no wonder my friends thought you were a space cadet, then."

Irony and coincidence, she was with Wally the dude and his mates. She told Dorian they were likely to beat shit out of me. No way, I thought. I could feel their intentions with my super-psychic sensors.

I walked back to the bar to confront them and soon we were all talking in a group. Droyd decided that Patty was going to sleep with him. Dorian told Patty this. She said no, but came back to Bates' flat with us.

Droyd and I hunched into a corner of his room and tried to understand things. Was it always like this? It seemed that I was tripping *all* the time.

Every so often, Dorian would come into the room in tears. "Are you okay?" we'd ask.

"No," she'd tremble, then stagger back into the other room.

After about two hours of this, I decided to stand up. I rose gradually and, over a period of minutes, I reached my full height.

I was a cliff-face. Long and high and terrible. I was way too high up. I couldn't bear the vertigo and clasped the mantelpiece before I reeled against the mirror.

I looked down at the countryside miles below. The hills looked like a three-piece suite, only textured way beyond nature's taste. The floor might as well have been the ocean floor. But my main concern was still the cliff-face. I stared pitifully at Droyd for encouragement and ideas. "How do I get down?" Droyd had no idea. I'd just have to stay there. And stay there I did, until Dorian came to tell me that Patty had left.

Lying in Batesy's bed that night, we were so tripped out that I couldn't handle it. Emotionally, our heads were caned. Also, Dorian was crazy. She didn't believe that she would ever stop tripping. I couldn't give her reassurance. I wasn't that sure myself. Days and nights were becoming one solid wedge of time nowadays. We lay there in tears, thinking that we were forever to be stuck like this. My stomach revolved with the amphetamine that was cut into the LSD.

At around 7 a.m. we fell asleep. It was good to have her over here. She had been in London almost 24 hours. Awlright!

The next day, I was supposed to record a B-side for our forthcoming single, 'Passionate Friend'. I'd listened to the first LP by my friend Pete Wylie's group Wah! It was very disappointing, but there was one image that I really got caught up in. One line said: "You've got 15 minutes, I've got 2,000 years."

That was the battle. It was Andy Warhol-fame versus the eternal fame of Jesus Christ. Yeah. I sat down and wrote a song called 'Christ v. Warhol'. That was my battle from now on. 'Cause I wanted *both*. NOW.

EAST OF THE EQUATOR

I was troubled. I knew what it was. I had too much control over the group. The friction had gone once Balfe had been kicked out. This was more apparent than ever when we recorded a bunch of songs in Fulham. I supervised everyone during a song called 'East of the Equator' and kicked all but Gary out for the rest of the session.

Gary and I put down the backing tracks for three songs in as many hours, then piled vocals and ideas on as quickly and as loose as we could get away with. The songs were 'Tiny Children', 'Christ versus Warhol' and a dreary harmonium and brass freak out called 'Window Shopping for a New Crown of Thorns'.

I had gently wrestled control from everyone and refused to delegate. Around this time, August 1981, Bill Drummond and Dave Balfe began to tell me that I was evil. This was not the paranoia of an acid king swanning his trip around his court. They became quite open about it and only a few of my close friends seemed to take my side.

I loved Bill Drummond. I mean, yes he had fucked me around and yes, he was a two-faced swine sometimes, but then, who isn't? I knew for shit damn sure that I was at least as bad at times, although only to minor characters in our scene.

The Teardrop Explodes was more and more like an old B17 bomber every day. Half of the crew and the engines were gone and the man in control had an almost kamikaze attitude towards landing.

I knew that Alfie and Jeff had become encumbrances and they were hassling to become full members. Troy, Gary and Drummond were whispering loudly in my ears about Balfe's rejoining and I was feeling more megalomaniac and guilty every day, what with Kathy's life being ruined and a bunch of people reliant on my not fucking up.

In mid-August, we recorded our new single, 'Passionate Friend', at Genetic Studios in Goring-on-Thames outside Reading. Goring is a beautiful and incredibly wealthy place. It is home to the DeFreitas clan and, as such, partly explained to me why Pete was so peaceful in his head. I reckoned

that equal doses of Liverpool and Goring would keep me on an even keel too.

The rest of the group stayed in the Miller of Mansfield, an old tavern in the centre of Goring. Dorian and I chose to remain up at the studio, in a weird chalet bungalow. If we left the doors open, flocks of geese would walk in to visit us.

See, the studio was brand new and all the money had been spent on equipment and technology. Martin Rushent, who owned the place, had made his money from the Stranglers and The Human League. He wasn't interested in comfort.

So here we were, the group, our long-time producer, Clive Langer, our engineer, Alan Winstanley, and a song that we'd recorded before and that had given us trouble.

Clive had rearranged 'Passionate Friend' by knocking out all the bits I had fussed over and concentrating on the hooks. We worked hard and quickly.

I decided not to play on the song, just sing. It made me feel more like the boss, you know? Writing a song and turning it over to the other musicians was a big kick for someone who, months before, was still pleased at being good enough to be on a record. What an inverted snobbery! Especially as I'd played all the instruments on the B-side.

At the end of the recording, Bill Drummond said it was the biggest hit so far. I was convinced of it, too. The song had hooks galore and it built and built till it couldn't build anymore. And it was sooo cool!

'Passionate Friend' came out to great reviews. Journalists said it sounded like The Turtles and by the second week of release we were on *Top of the Pops*. Once a group has been on *Top of the Pops* a couple of times, it feels like a God-given right to be on. As though that's it for the rest of your life. We called the show "Toppy" in true Liverpool tradition.

We piled into the "Toppy" studios for what was to be a "live" broadcast. Of course, we were still going to be lip-synching, but it was screened directly to its regular 10 million viewers.

Gary and I took hits of LSD during the afternoon and our dressing room had a vague narcotics lab feel about it, what with Droyd and Bates and the head of Phonogram TV punishing large quantities of powder.

We lurched over to our set. I was going to perform the whole song on top of a grand piano, in bare feet with leather pants and a shit embroidered top that I'd made from a Columbia Hotel pillow-case.

I climbed onto the piano and freaked. No way. I could barely stand up on the ground. Up on the piano, I felt like Basketball Jones, the cartoon kid from the Cheech & Chong video who keeps getting bigger and bigger.

I looked up into the ceiling of the studio. The lights twinkled like distant stars. From my elevated position on the piano, studio technicians and members of other groups looked grotesque. The acid heightened the fake tans of everyone in the room and only accentuated the paleness of the Teardrop members. Of course, if they'd had the chance, Alfie, Jeff and Gary would have been sun-worshippers, but I had to keep those bastards in check.

We ran through the camera rehearsal and loped back to the dressing room. The next few hours were spent smoking spliff, with everyone trying in vain to dissuade me from wearing the orange pillow-case.

"Okay, Copey ... Five minutes and you're on."

Uh? Wow, Batesy was right. I sat head down with the front of my leathers undone. Sweat coursed down my belly and I mopped it up with my shitty top. I was paranoid as hell. The BBC make-up women had scared the shit out of me. They had asked me if I'd just come back from the Bahamas and said they loved my tan. Of course, irony is lost on someone who's tripping his brain out, so I figured that I must be turning brown.

"I'm not too dark *really*, am I?"

"Fuckin' 'ell, Copey. You're dead pale, honest."

Gary was trying to make me feel better, but what did he know? He was tripping too and I didn't want people placating me.

It was time to go. I wasn't ready. We had to go. I wasn't ready. Why aren't you ready? I don't feel tall enough. Well, you're gonna be standing on top of a piano. Is that tall enough for you? Eh?

They led me reluctantly out to the studio floor. It was total chaos out there. People were running around and freaking out and winding everyone else up. I suddenly felt very becalmed.

A group called Buck's Fizz was doing their thing on the other side of the studio. They were a two-boy, two-girl fun group with cutesy expressions and dance routines. We were to follow them.

I watched, fascinated, then, as time moved slowly on, I felt sucked into their scene. God, they were brilliant. I wanted to be in Buck's Fizz. I rushed over to Gary and hit him with the idea. The two of us should join. Imagine an acid soaked dance group with showbiz routines, it would be incredible.

It was two minutes to our performance. We had to be exact as it was live, so no mistakes. Bates dragged me to the grand piano. Shit, it's like an ocean liner. The piano was exquisite and moved gently past me as I walked around it. Little girls ran over to me as I climbed aboard it. I smiled my most ridiculous and inane grin and, after much manoeuvring, scrambled to the top of this vast and polished plateau.

The finish of the piano was unbelievable. I waded in its high-gloss black syrup, my bare feet sinking deeper and deeper into the surface like hot wet tar on a newly completed road. It was all I could think about.

"Don't jump around too much, Copey. It'll cost us a fortune if you wreck that thing."

Oh, thanks a lot, Batesy. Thanks fucking loads. That's just what I want to hear when I'm tripping on live TV. The boom camera swung away from Buck's Fizz as their song faded out.

Everyone was in position and I forgot to duck as the camera crane whizzed past my head, nearly knocking me from my dubious perch. Okay, I'm not in Buck's Fizz. I'm not. Better remember.

"*The friend I have is a passionate friend, but I can't see you buying ...*"

'Passionate Friend' doesn't have an intro or anything. It just *starts* - vocals, drums, guitar, everything. All together. In a split second, I was fighting for my life up on the piano.

I looked back at Gary, who was off his head. His blond quiff was hanging straight out over his face, jiblike and starched and strong like a newly creosoted fence. I wanted to climb onto it and walk along its length, like a sailor walking the plank.

Around me, the song waged war with itself. So much going on. How can I keep this together? Who cares, I'm doing fine. I looked down at Jeff, thousands of feet below me at the piano keyboard. He looked ridiculous to me, like the Phantom of the Opera or some such shit.

Now, 'Passionate Friend' is also one of those songs that has a reprise. See, the whole song builds to a climax, then we come to a stop and start the whole thing again. Suddenly, I was miming, "*The friend I have is a passionate friend, but I can't see you buying...*"

Hold on, I thought. What's all this? My mind did double-takes and I battled for some sense of reality. Maybe this was the real start of the performance. Maybe I'd imagined the first half of the song. What the hell is going on?

I felt the song disappearing into a tunnel. It was fading out and the *Top of the Pops a*udience was cheering. I felt as though I had been up there for days. But I'd done battle and I seemed to have won.

In the next couple of weeks, that single went up and up. Ha. The weirdest thing was how it went up: one place at a time or even sticking at the same place for a week.

I figured it was time to get rid of Alfie and Jeff. I told Bill Drummond to do it and we played *Top of the Pops* two weeks later with Balfe on bass and no keyboard player. We were back to the same line-up as 10 months before.

The Bunnymen had already released *Heaven Up Here*, their second album, whilst we were touring our asses off in America. I had all the songs written for our second album. Balfe, Troy, Gary and Clive Langer sat in a London rehearsal room, swapping instruments and rearranging my songs. I sent Dorian home to give me some time to concentrate on the recording, the group holed up in the Columbia once more and Dave Bates booked us into Air Studios in Oxford Street.

MORE BY LUCK THAN JUDGEMENT, HERE AM I

My hotel room at the Columbia stank. My clothes stank and I stank. It all came down to a lax attitude towards hygiene and a chemical enlarging of my skin pores, March to September in the same clothes and a general inability to hose down anything other than my body.

Rumours of the group's imminent demise had begun months before, but the sacking of Alfie and Jeff brought cries and letters from the teeny girls I was trying so hard to piss off.

In *Record Mirror*, a cartoon Cope with huge bags under his eyes was seen shitting in a shower. Under the caption was a story, precisely what had happened in Candy's room over four years before, but written as though it took place only yesterday.

After the long US headtrip, I had let my hair grow and grow until it was crazy and matted and bleached by the sun. I wouldn't wash it for months on end in case it lost its shape, but it was so dirty by now that I could mould it into place with my hands.

When Dorian was around, she insisted that I use deodorant and hairspray to hide the smell, but now she was back in New York. I needed to start 'The Great Dominions' without romance and women adding to the confusion. I had a semi-beard over my sunken cheeks and was convinced I looked Messianic. The leathers were gone for the moment, replaced by black para-military gear and Bob Proctor's mirror shades.

Air Studios at 214 Oxford Street is one of the best in London. It's situated on the top floor, overlooking Oxford Circus, and only artists with some kind of reputation seem to get booked in there, as it costs a fortune.

The first day, we all piled into the reception, smoked a few spliffs and lay in a heap in front of the manageress's office. Gary and I awoke to see Paul Weller and Co. easing past us, muttering "Hippies" under their breath.

The Jam were recording down the corridor and had just released their 'Absolute Beginners' single. Ha, they call us hippies but they're not averse

to ripping us off, I thought. That brass sound was patent Teardrop and everybody, including the press, agreed.

Japan were just finishing their *Tindrum* LP and Patty, Air's manageress, was having a thing with one of them. Of course, now they were leaving and Troy quickly stepped in to fill the breach.

Troy baby was in love all day and every day. Women adored him. In fact, so did men, you know. He was so into everything. Every day, Troy would look at me and say, "Hey, baby, is this Bliss Street or what?" Then he'd raise his eyes to the heavens and look 10 million times more cartoon than I ever could.

We began the recordings with a Scots engineer called Colin Fairley. We intended to use a different bass player for most of the songs, but Gary and I laid down the basic tracks. Other songs didn't have rhythm tracks; we just built them up over loops of grooves or synthesizer pulses that Balfe and Gary had worked on.

There was no set formula. Compared with *Kilimanjaro,* the new album was not even made by a group. Clive Langer would play guitar, Balfe made all the weird synth noises and I played most of the piano and organ.

Sometimes it became total bloody hell. Balfe and I were taking a lot of speed and our judgement became severely impaired. Amphetamines tend to make a person grossly over-confident and everyone told me that I was very threatening. I disagreed. Balfe's the threat, man.

Songs changed drastically once we jammed them. One song, called 'Seven Views of Jerusalem', started life as a kind of acoustic Tim Buckley country ballad. Balfe said it was shit and wrote an entire marimba and percussion groove for it. He was *right*. I started to trust him again.

My favourite song on the album was 'The Great Dominions'. We had toured it on just piano, but it sounded too pompous to me and I wanted radical changes. Balfe built up a loop of synthesized breathing and scraping by sellotaping the D notes down on his Prophet 5 and just playing the buttons. I added organ and we recorded Gary's drums in the huge Studio l with just one microphone suspended from the ceiling. Troy baby

played one solitary and mournful guitar and I added a lumbering Duane Eddy bass.

Over the weeks the album took shape, but never without major freak outs. One time, I got paranoid that Balfe was getting control, so I caught a midnight train to Liverpool and moaned and bitched the whole weekend away with Pam, Zoo's long suffering secretary, and anyone else with Balfe grievances.

Dave Bates wanted killer singles on this album. He heard the basic unfinished version of a song called 'Colours Fly Away from You' and told me to get it finished as quickly as possible. I hated that pressure. I agreed with Bates that it would be a brilliant single, but no way was I going to tell him. Without Dorian and with the added Bates / Balfe intrusion, the early ease of recording began to slip away.

"Hey, Ringo, are you still alive down there?"

I looked up from the floor of reception and saw Linda McCartney walking down the corridor. I prodded Gary, who was lying half on top of me and half on the couch.

"Hey, Garfield, Linda McCartney called you Ringo."

We'd been calling Gary "Ringo" for about a year. He *was* like Ringo. But for Linda Mac to give her approval? For the next month, Gary Dwyer *was* Ringo Starr.

Now that The Jam were gone, Paul McCartney was recording his 10 billionth album at Air. We started hanging out together. Awlright, I'd finally see how the Establishment had got that way.

I expected to hate McCartney. I'd been fed a diet of the *Let It Be* film and Dave Bates' Beatles bootlegs. In both, Paul McCartney came over like some uptight twee-boy. He wasn't like that at all, though. I dug him; he was pretty hard. Also he smashed Balfe at pool, which was worth shitloads.

My 24th birthday came right in the middle of recording. Linda Mac gave me a copy of her *Linda's Pictures* book, and McCartney gave me his book

with a cartoon and an inscription in the front. Ha, I finally had something to give to my mother to prove this business was not all illusion.

I celebrated by giving Linda Mac a copy of *Fire Escape in the Sky*. This was a compilation of Scott Walker recordings which we had released on Zoo Records. Bill Drummond and I had licensed the tapes and I'd picked my favourite stuff. We even designed a plain grey album sleeve; I wanted all those post-punk dudes and dudettes to buy Scott in droves.

The album dragged on. *Kilimanjaro* had cost £20,000 to record. We were only halfway through this one and Bates said we'd gone over £40,000 already. Huh.

My nerve was going. I still tripped for days at a time, but the recording had brought it pretty much to a standstill. My throat was so sore with the raw rough-cut yellow amphetamine that we got from Liverpool. I sang along to a song called 'Falling Down Around Me' and Clive Langer said it sounded great. My throat was so painful that I could only manage two takes, but we got it, no problem.

The rest of the time was not so simple. I'd sit on my own at the organ in the big room, staring through the glass into the control room. Balfe, Clive, Troy and Colin Fairley sat motionless and uncommunicative, sometimes for hours at a time.

Every day, journalists and record company people were around. The new album was big news and the teeny girls were still expectant.

I called Dorian back from New York to give me some sense of normality, but it wasn't normal. I mean, we were expected to act like stars and stuff but the whole group was still on £35 per week. I couldn't even pay hotel phone bills. Clive Langer had to take us out to eat pretty much every night, as he had money from his string of Madness hits, which were still coming thick and fast that autumn.

Also, because of Air Studios' location, we were stuck in the tourist make-a fast-buck heartland of central London. If I walked more than 100 yards from the studios, I became hopelessly lost. The same with Gary. So we had to pork out in the expensive eateries where most people just come to graze and be seen.

Torino's became our hang-out. Torino's? I mean, what a shit name. That's like having a cafe in Rome and calling it Coventry's. They hated us there. We hated them, but we were stuck with it. A quiche and cappuccino nightmare, you could spend a week's wages on just the smoked herring salad! Gary would sit with his balls out and I would stare glassily round, dressed only in my nightshirt. I felt like Lawrence of Arabia, only *after* he'd gone off the rails.

I had my first LSD flashback there. The whole restaurant pulsated orange and the colours ran into my eyes, stinging like shampoo. It scared the hell out of me and Clive became paranoid as a bastard. See, his older brother had suffered brain damage from *one trip*. He still lives with Clive's parents, it's such a sad, sad thing. So Clive spent the rest of the album trying to convince me off the stuff.

Pressure on. We need the album *now*. We need it for Christmas and we need a single ready in two weeks. Phonogram Records had already taken advance orders for 100,000 copies of the new album.

Dave Bates was still insisting on 'Colours Fly Away from You' as the next single. I wanted 'Bent out of Shape' which was much classier and far less obvious.

Bates kept on at me how he'd let me take my time and how he'd allowed me to make the record *my* way, and all this miserable stuff. After the sneaky and shabby release of 'Ha Ha, I'm Drowning' that summer, I was paranoid as hell. But I was knackered, off my head and not well supported by my management. Finally, and working against intuition, I conceded. Fucking give him 'Colours ...' and be done with it.

In two weeks, with the single pressed and ready to go, Dave Bates decided that I was right, 'Bent out of Shape' would have been a better 45.

All around me, I felt the machinery engaging once more. The album was not yet ready, but that was *my* problem. They had a schedule and this album had to be the biggest Phonogram release of the Christmas period.

Dave Balfe was not yet fully operational; he was still excited at being back in the group and right now his head was in art mode. Great. The longer he stays like that, the better.

Balfe was obsessed with the word "empirical", which means to judge the world only on one's experience. In other words, don't trust the theory types. I could dig that in a big ass way. I had left the education system for the same reason - it was full of "teachers" who had done sod all in the outside world.

Balfe and I both believed in following intuition to its end. I had avoided drugs all through the peer pressure days of school and adolescence. Now I had embraced them, I felt utterly devoured with an "I'm taking this because I want to take it" attitude. I wanted to fuck me up, and Balfe seemed to want to come too. We had no time for assholes who said what they felt people should hear. Rock musicians are notoriously under-educated gauche lucky shits ... but I saw that as a strength, not a weakness.

BAD TO THE BONE AT CLUB ZOO

So *Wilder* was finished. Thank God for that. These things start so sneakily and then drag on for the rest of your life.

The main thing was that it sounded the way I felt. I didn't know if I liked it. I'd stopped caring whether I liked our music, really. All I was interested in was getting precisely what I felt onto tape. See, there was this creeping gloriousness entering rock'n'roll, and I'd been at least partly responsible. I had pushed against the icy metallic late-punk thing. My voice was finally getting strong, but it could get out of hand. Mac's singing on the Bunnymen's *Heaven Up Here* LP had become a Teardrop joke. It was pompous and old-fartish, like some crap Victorian actor reducing Shakespeare to a series of postures and declamations. I hated music that wished to impress. If you want to impress people, run the 100 metres. Music is there to touch people. If you pretend you feel more than you do, you're just being rude.

Evil was seeping around me by now. What had started as a simple fear from years ago was becoming bigger and scarier all the time. Bill Drummond told me that I needed to reduce myself still further. It was not enough just to let Balfe back in the group. I drew a black "X" on my belly, to ward off evil. Magic marker stays on fairly indefinitely but needs to be touched up from time to time.

Bill had booked a five-storey club in a back street in Liverpool where we could play every night. The idea was a multi-media place called Club Zoo. On each level of the club, various shit would happen simultaneously.

One one floor, we'd run full-length cult movies.

One another floor, the ever-changing support group would play. On the third floor, a bar for everyone with games and shit.

On the top floor, a haven for the group and their entourage to do their thing.

Finally, in the basement, The Teardrop Explodes would play two, sets per night, three nights a week for six weeks, and, in the words of Bill D.,

"They'll be so bored, they'll have to get good."

After the summer nightmare of Odeons and theatres filled with pre-teens, this appealed to me in a big ass way. The club was in Temple Street, a tiny back alley, and was run by real nice Liverpool mobsters. Colin Butler, whom Bill had brought in as a surrogate manager, having given himself over almost entirely to the Bunnymen, turned them on to speed within days of our arrival and, combined with his "excellent grass", soon had everyone eating out of his hand.

The first night was a shambles. About 50 people came. No-one would believe that we would play in such a shithole.

The next night, a few more people arrived. Most of them couldn't even find the place. I didn't care. I was in Liverpool again and away from the strain of being successful.

We were staying at the New Manx Hotel on Catherine Street. It was a nice clean shithole run by an older faggy guy called Jim who drank himself slowly into oblivion each day. Jim loved us all. He was used to comedians and vaudeville types, so his rules were lax as hell. Breakfast finished at 1 o'clock, or when he ran out of eggs. The dining-room walls were covered in 8" X 10" photographs of stars in varying degrees: Billy Dainty, Sarah Vaughan, Max Wall, Aimee McDonald, Brian Cant, Ida Lupino ... on and on. And each one had a story, a story that was endlessly repeated to each newcomer to the hotel. Oh yeah, and Jim was Santa Claus! I didn't pay much attention to that one the first time round. I figured I'd just misheard it. You couldn't ask Jim to qualify things that he said; no-one in this world has that much spare time.

Club Zoo began to pick up pace. In two weeks, we had a regular clientele. But you know all that stuff about losing the star-trip? It was bullshit.

One night, I spent half an hour refusing to let Pete Wylie in for free. I'd send messages down from our "chambers" that "everyone must pay". Of course, I let everyone I felt like in for free. Boxhead, Bernie Connors, Timmo, they all piled in for nothing. I made a point of letting Johnno in because he was my mate and also Wylie's guitarist in Wah!

So the club just enabled me to carry the bitching right into my own back yard.

The top floor was our inner sanctum. But in the far corner was my inner inner sanctum. We draped it with flags and muslin and low lights burned up from the floor.

I would lie, propped up, on a bed and "see" people. Balfe and Bill regularly told me it was out of hand, but they enjoyed it as much as everyone else.

That autumn, whoever was playing in Liverpool would hang out afterwards in Club Zoo. I would never see them unless I already knew them. I couldn't handle being with anyone more successful than me, it just drove me crazy. The Human League came down one night; I just pursued Suzanne with a camera, I couldn't even face her without the lens separating us. Phil Oakey, the singer, didn't come down. I was sooo relieved.

As the weeks passed, the club became my whole life. I rang Dorian less and less. I took more of what people gave me. The far-out became more and more commonplace.

One couple returned again and again. The boy was pretty and about 21. He wanted me to sleep with his girlfriend. I thought that was weird, but they both wanted it a lot. I didn't like that.

Two young kids from Birkenhead, Liverpool's New Jersey, told me how they stood for hours gazing at the city lights and listening to The Teardrop Explodes, whilst the LSD transformed their empty space into something romantic. Every week they brought me something new to try. One night, I gobbled down a tablet, as usual without asking, only to be told that it was methadone, a heroin substitute. We were between sets and I had an hour to come down. I sweated and snorted. My breathing was way too much and I felt my respiratory system giving way. I rushed into the ladies' room and threw up a trail of mud-brown soup across the floor. Then I lolled my head into a bowl and passed out.

When I awoke, I had five minutes before stage. Colin gave me some brown speed and I was alive and ready to go. Everyone in the dressing room was laughing at me. They often laughed. I was a cliche in full battle-

gear. God, though, I was so sad. I hated the thought of what I was becoming, but I couldn't see any way around it. It was in the stars. I was bad, and even the people around me knew it.

There was a song by Armand Schaubroeuk called 'King of the Streets' that I played all the time. The chorus was my life:

"I'm going down, down the road, the road to hell. Lord, I'm going down..."

It made me so sad. I wanted to be good. I wanted the goodness of Jesus Christ and everything bad to be banished from me. But I felt as though my fate was carved in stone and there was no way out.

We waited for the inevitable *Top of the Pops* performance for 'Colours Fly Away', which I was not looking forward to. We had already spent too much money on a Bill Butt video shot at a chemical plant in Bristol. We'd hired a helicopter for a whole day and spent from 6 a.m. until 2 o'clock the next morning trying to get all the shots. The most exciting part was hanging out of the open door, which had been removed to give a better shot. The rest was just a drag. The whole group had taken a lot of amphetamine to keep awake. The result was five guys with the bug-eyes of life, Dave Balfe even more than usual.

Anyway, in the cocoon of Club Zoo, the progress of the single was noted with yawning disinterest. That is, of course, until it was not a hit. Not even close. It stayed at no. 54 then slid down and out.

Wow. I wasn't expecting that. Where was the *Top of the Pops* pisstake which I was so used to detesting? Who fucked up? Find a scapegoat.

It angered me that my desire for success was still there. I prided myself on not caring, but I was fooling myself. I had cut my hair short to get rid of the teenies, abused them constantly on the British tour and in the press, recorded a second album that was in no way a follow-up to the *Kilimanjaro* LP and still expected them to buy our records in droves.

The *Wilder* album was Phonogram Records' flop of the year. It was expected to be huge and they had shipped 120,000 to the shops. Even the press dug it. No matter, 50,000 were sent back to be stored and destroyed and in three weeks the record was out of the Top 100 and history.

Letters flooded in to *Smash Hits* magazine. Young girls said I was an asshole with a bad haircut. All the hip alternative dudes hated me for my vacillation between pop star and Scott Morrison Wannabee. The best joke I'd heard in years arrived in November 1981: "What's the difference between The Teardrop Explodes and a cow?"

"A cow has horns at the front and a twat at the back."

I sort of shacked up with Gary Dwyer's cousin Sharon at the New Manx. She was married and a close friend of my ex-wife, so we had to be secretive. Of course we weren't, so everyone hated me even more.

The shows became outlandish and everyone took it for granted that I would at least rip my arms open on the rough pillar in the centre of the stage every night. Sometimes I would bay like a hound and wade into the audience, singing entire songs hidden from view. Dave Hughes, from Dalek I Love You, filmed the majority of the shows. We'd watch them each night and laugh.

If anyone talked during a quiet song, I would stop and single them out, then refuse to sing any more. The black cross on my stomach became bigger and bigger, and I'd spout what Balfe termed "streams of unconsciousness". I'd argue with songs, explain lyrics, do "face-solos" and give away my clothes from the stage. We filmed a *Melody Maker* session at the "Sputnik" Catholic cathedral. I climbed up one of the 45-degree buttresses, then fell off and broke my ankle. The rest of Club Zoo's performances were done in a leg-iron.

We filmed a Christmas *Top of the Pops* in which I wore just my flannel nightshirt. We played 'Reward' and I felt as though we were history. We were.

At 8 p.m. on Christmas Eve, I left the New Manx Hotel and hailed a taxi. He didn't want to take me to Tamworth, as it was 100 miles away. I promised him a £10 tip and he grudgingly took me.

My parents' house was an oasis of normality for a week but I was back in the New Manx Hotel for New Year's Eve. Sharon and I rang in the new year in room no. 5, high on LSD and champagne.

LONG GONE AT McGONNIGLE'S

When we took Club Zoo to Dublin in January '82, Bill Drummond was conspicuous by his absence. Colin Butler was now in full charge of operations and the whole group noticed an immediate improvement in the quality of drugs we were taking.

Mick Houghton, our soft-spoken and deep publicist, was there to coordinate the huge amounts of press and photo sessions expected. The group was still big news, as the failure of the album hadn't been completely realised yet.

We set up home at Bailey's Hotel, the line between hangers-on and road crew becoming less and less defined all the time, especially with Tempo, Robbo and Jamie Connors in our actual road crew now. Besides, the Liverpool scene was different. One night, when I came to my room to sleep, Mick Aslanian and Bernie Connors were both tucked up in my bed.

"Fuck off, Copey. Don't be such a star."

Hmm, maybe they were right. This'll keep me in my place, I thought, as I dragged the cot mattress into the corridor to sleep.

The first show at McGonnigle's club was a lot of fun, but a little off the wall. People expected me to be the way I appeared in the press and, as I didn't feel too inspired and we'd never played Ireland before, I gave them pretty much what they expected.

There was a double-album Teardrop bootleg around at that time called *Petulance*. The title sums up perfectly where my head was then at. It wears thin pretty soon, actually. It even gets to be a drag if you are the perpetrator.

After the show, I walked with Mick Aslanian, Jamie Connors and Kevin Connolly to a pub to try Guinness. Kevin and I had taken a great many magic mushrooms in the dressing room and I began to piss everyone off. I was enthusiastic about everything. I saw a busker who was kneeling down playing the flute. I was convinced he was a leprechaun and hassled the guy vigorously. By the time I had finished, Kev and Jamie had fled, leaving the

ill-equipped Mick Aslanian to accompany me. Mick is like Ed Norton from *The Honeymooners*. He's sweet and full of good intentions and easily freaked out. His Liverpool nickname was Partial. I thought it was because he behaved like a man with no direct link between his body and his brain. The other stories sounded like urban legend, and highly unlikely.

At Bailey's Hotel, a party was in full swing in Kev and Jamie's room. A young girl with a dark feather cut sat in the biggest armchair, dispensing pills to everyone. She said she was 16 and her father was a road manager for The Grateful Dead. She said there was a picture of her on the back of the *AOX OMOXOA* album at nine years old. She was completely off her head, the first person I'd met who was almost intolerably crazy.

Alison and Aishling, the girlfriends of Bono and the Edge, disrespectfully, were also ensconced in the room, obviously checking up on what the bad guys get up to.

Partial and I arrived into the middle of a scene. Neither of us could work out what was going on. We had been stuck in O'Connell Street for 30 minutes as I tried to give all my money away to girl guides, until Partial reasoned with me long enough that if anyone deserved it, he did.

Troy arrived, stayed just long enough to call everybody "Baby", then left with a secret stash of women.

Dave Balfe sat, eyes blazing, fully upright on the bed and told me that I must try the Adolescent's acid. I told both of them that I'd taken mushrooms instead, but this only fired her up more.

"Please take my stuff," she wailed.

Okay, I'll try some. But only if Kev takes some, too. I told the Adolescent that if she was so concerned with dosing us up, she should have some as well. "No way," wailed the Adolescent. "On acid, I could never handle that you're more famous than me."

"But you're not famous at all," I blurted, confused by her reasoning.

"Well, don't fucking rub it in!" she howled.

Wow, even in my solipsistic, egotistic, Odinistic acid one-ness, the self possession of that last outburst double-took me to the core. Right on.

Six hours later, Balfe, Gary and I sat in Colin Butler's room, freaked out. The U2 girls had treated us like the Devil himself and weird shit had happened. Now we wanted to be normal, and quick.

Balfe carelessly played with a spilt sachet of coffee complement on the glass table-top. All Colin's powders had long since been snorted, but he still handed a blade to Balfe, maybe out of wishful thinking.

Two minutes later, Troy and his posse of females piled into the bedroom. He saw the mound of coffee complement which by now had been chopped into four lines by Dave Balfe.

"Hey, baby, is there enough for me there?" Troy's nostrils flared in a macho post-coital kind of way.

"Sure, Troy. Take the biggest."

Balfe caught my grin, but managed to suppress his own. Troy would surely discover the deception in seconds.

Troy Tate carefully took his cleanest, largest Irish note, rolled it lovingly into a neat thin stem and held it delicately but firmly over one end of the white lines of powder. He looked around at his adoring girlfriends, flashed us his best James Bond smile and, with perfect and unconscious comedy timing, said, "Too much of this stuff can make you stupid." Then he put the whole lot up his nose.

Balfe, Gary and I were down the corridor in a second, screaming in disbelief, hysterically crying. We ran and we ran and hoped Colin would sort it out.

DOWN

I loved Colin Butler. He was our salvation. He made everything fun again. He didn't hassle Gary and me with business shit, he just kept us high and happy.

Dave Bates, Pam Young, even Bill Drummond, they just wanted to make me miserable. Not Colin, though. He was our man. He was for us. I think his greatest dream was to go to Australia.

My belongings were strewn over many cities by now. I'd left all my US tour stuff at Dorian's apartment on East 13th Street in Manhattan to give her an everyday feeling of me. Other clothes and a vast amount of records were back in my old bedroom at my parents' house in Tamworth. The room was depressingly different in every other way, though. Gone was the psychedelic purple wallpaper from 1972 with the Faust manifestos and the posters pasted everywhere. And gone, too, was the class of '77 additions which I had brought for Joss when he took the room over. At Dave Bates' flat in Marylebone I still had stacks of LPs, boxes of cassettes and shit all over Droyd's room. But the saddest place was my old flat in Devonshire Road in Liverpool. When my ex-wife moved out, I had asked Pete DeFreitas to move in. Even at my most paranoid, I trusted Pete pretty much completely. But he wasn't the tidiest dude in the world.

Our crazy Adolescent guest had been staying in and around the Teardrop camp for months. She paid her way with consignments of drugs sent by her father from the West Coast. But she was finally beginning to blow our minds. She was everywhere. There were a lot of strange people around the Teardrop at this time, but every minute of every day the Adolescent would be screaming long and into the night. I rang DeFreitas and told him that I was sending the Adolescent up to Liverpool to stay with him at my old place.

"Cool, man. Simmo's here, too. He's trying to avoid someone."

We sent the Adolescent up there, went off to record and play a British tour, and promptly forgot about it.

I had written a beautiful new song, on organ, called 'You Disappear from View'. It was a wistful love ballad to an unseen girl, the kind who would not come running every time I called. During the Club Zoo dates, the group had turned it into a kind of Earth, Wind & Fire funk workout, syncopated brass stabs and a real dude supreme of a bass line from Ronnie Francois.

We returned to Genetic Studios, with a reluctant Clive Langer, to record the song as the next single. Everything went fine, but Balfe and I were unhappy with the result. I liked it but felt it wasn't the kind of direction we should be going in. Balfe just detested it. We went off on tour and left Clive Langer to stew over it, remix it and come up with the goods.

It was two months later when we arrived in Liverpool for our first show since Club Zoo. The smiling Colin Butler was still keeping us happy, but his desire to go to Australia was becoming a passion.

Simmo had rung either Balfe or me almost every day. We didn't take his calls, though, as we guessed it was about the Adolescent.

The group all checked into the New Manx Hotel and I walked the half-mile down Prince's Road to my old flat. The place looked like a Beirut tenement. All my clothes were piled in one corner of my spare room. Under my clothes were a few of the toys I had kept since I was a child and the Victorian crockery which my grandmother had given to me. I waded through the lot trying to sort things out.

In the kitchen was a mound of unpaid bills, final demands written in red and addressed to Mr J. D. Cope, including an electricity bill for £266. I was still on £35 per week and broke.

In my grandmother's Victorian sideboard, in the vast yellow and red living room, were the Echo & the Bunnymen tour accounts, chequebooks, bank statements and about 20 unmatching black socks. This kind of relieved me. At least the Bunnymen were chaotic as well, more so really. I mean, giving DeFreitas responsibility for all *that* shit?

Simmo pleaded with me to take the Adolescent away. "She's off her head, Copey. She's been selling acid to Kev Connolly for 20p a tab. Her dad sends it from Los Angeles with *your* name on it."

Even DeFreitas, a man normally known for his capacity to chill out in the most extreme situation, was worried. He told me that we had to stop her right now. About six packages of acid and MDA, each package containing 200 tablets, had arrived at *my* home with *my* name on the envelopes, in the last two months. With my burgeoning reputation for LSD in the press and the Adolescent's increasingly loud mouth, we had to catch it whilst we could.

Balfe and I sorted it out the only way we knew. We were already fighting the rest of the group and the record company over the release of 'You Disappear from View', which still sounded like shit to us. We took the Adolescent and her friend on the rest of the tour and decided that we *would* follow Colin's intuition and go to Australia after all.

SPIRAL

It was warm spring weather and the English countryside looked particularly beautiful as I sat in the back of a car speeding towards Heathrow Airport. It was still very early morning and I was half asleep.

Colin Butler was driving and his weird friend Martin was skinning up a huge grass spliff in the passenger seat. From the stereo, blasting at full volume, was the ever-present major-league drag known as 'You Disappear from View'. "I still say you're crazy," beamed Colin. "This sounds like a hit to me if ever there was one."

"Fucking hell, man. *You're* the crazy one. It's total fucking kack." I refused to be drawn into this stupid bastard conversation *one* more time.

"... and you disappear from view, very unlike the other ones..."

Colin enthused over music the same way he enthused over the cricket or over scoring some particularly fine weed. Everything was so bloody jolly all the time. I really dug the guy, but he knew shit about music.

In the front seats, Martin was causing chaos. He'd dropped the open grass tin on to his lap and now Colin was trying to retrieve the situation by swerving all over the place and panicking. At that moment, we entered a town called Tring. Now, even I knew that Tring was not on the way to Heathrow.

"Come on, man, get your shit together," I yelled. "We're not even going the right way. You two are acting like you're fucking tripping."

Colin Butler turned half around and smiled.

Oh, great. We're off to Australia and the manager's tripping. At that moment, I yearned for normality. Couldn't *any*body act like a reasonable human being?

In the front seat, Colin and Martin cackled and guffawed, their faces gleeful and drooling. They were both small, each around 5'6", and I felt as though I were being driven by two psycho-hobbits.

I persuaded them back on to a route that would actually get us to the airport, but I was resentful as hell at having to take charge. Martin and I swapped seats, l put a Tim Buckley album on the car stereo and threw the cassette of 'You Disappear ...' out of the window.

It was four hours later. From the window of the 747, I could see cobwebs stretched over a carpet with an ever-changing pattern. My face sagged. I had Oliver Reed's face. My jowls were blue, they must be. My eyes drooped and I was that dog, the one out of the cartoon.

"I'm that dog," I said to Balfe, who was staring at an in-flight magazine.

"Uh?" he said, unaware that I'd even spoken.

"I'm that dog ... you know, the one out of that cartoon."

"Droopy," said Pip, our lighting guy, leaning in from his seat next to Balfe.

"Bloody hell, Pip. Why don't you lean a bit more?" Balfe was irritated, I could tell.

Whenever Balfe got irritated, I could feel a "Wind-up Balfe" mood immediately begin to build inside me.

The shit had really hit at the airport. The road crew had loaded everything, equipment and all, onto the plane. They were all pissed off at Colin, who placated them with the suggestion that we *all take acid*.

Now, I was *not* into that. Couldn't we behave for once? I really wanted to be good, after my recent revelations. I started a totally unconvincing rap, which the group and the crew laughed at.

Gary took some. Then Balfe took some. Then Ronnie Francois, Ted Emmett and Mal, our guitar guy. Pip had some and so did Mark Napier, our 17-year-old sound technician. I was actually the last to have any.

We had a 32-hour flight to Sydney, via San Francisco and Hawaii. There were 11 people in the party and 9 of them boarded the plane high on LSD.

Oh well, if shit happened, we could still rely on Troy Tate and our sound guy, Neil Levine. Ho-hum.

For the first few hours, I was consumed with an hour-long cassette of Throbbing Gristle called *Beyond Jazz Funk*. It's hard to describe their music, really. At worst, it's just rubbish, and at best, it's the product of genuinely sick people. I played the tape over and over. It got so that I didn't feel I was listening to anything at all, just the sound of my own amplified brain.

I plopped the headphones over Dave Balfe's ears for a reaction. "Copey, yer fuckin' twat. What's that shit?"

I had intruded and that was good enough.

I got up and scanned the rows of people, looking for Colin. He was engrossed in some newspaper and was smoking a long luxurious-looking joint. I squeezed past people and walked up to him.

"Is that cool?" I asked him, pointing at the spliff.

"Sure," he said. "Just do this," and he put his right arm above his head and wafted the smoke around.

I stood in the aisle and took a few tokes, but I was paranoid as hell. People were looking at me, so I passed it back to him.

At the back of the plane, a scene was developing. Gary and Ronnie were looking out of the last emergency exit. I was back in my place and listening once more to Throbbing Gristle. I had tried to interest an old lady in the tape. I was extremely polite about it, but she looked more scared than anything.

Meanwhile, up at the back, Colin had joined Ronnie and Gary and they were smoking another joint. One of the older stewardesses, a blonde Scandinavian, was talking to them. I got jealous of their scene and rushed up to join them.

"If we 'ad Jacob's ladder, we could hang it out of the plane," said Gary. "Then we could climb down it and dive in one o' them lakes."

Thirty-five thousand feet below, the weird outline of Newfoundland could be seen.

The blonde stewardess was getting on well with Colin. She told him to be careful with the spliffs and did we have any coke? I couldn't believe it. Colin Butler led a charmed life. No-one acted this cool when he was not around. I stared at the stewardess, right up close.

"What iss he on?" she asked Colin.

"Oh, he's just tripping like the rest of us."

She smiled at me and I figured I must be safe.

It's a 13-hour flight to San Francisco. As the passengers began to get restless, there were always at least nine people on board who were fascinated by *anything*.

Our friendly stewardess handed me a white US immigration form which I sat and smiled at for about two hours. I couldn't hope to fill it in in my present condition.

Time passed. The trips slowly began to wear off. Our party all looked frayed and distant. Except for Gary, that is, who just looked totally disgusting. He sat bolt upright and in pain. His quiff was droopy and his face dark and glowering. I was about three rows behind and I could hear him moaning loudly.

"Our" stewardess helped him into the galley, where he stayed for the rest of the flight. She told Colin that Gary should see a doctor as soon as we landed in San Francisco. We had a four-hour layover, so it shouldn't be a problem.

It was Mal who realised Colin Butler's error: we needed temporary US visas for the layover. I didn't have one and neither did Gary, Balfe nor Pip.

We were totally pissed off when we landed. Thirteen hours of tripping at 35,000 feet and then straight into a "holding tank". The San Francisco authorities politely escorted us down to a room with no facilities, miles away from anyone. Then they locked the door and came back 45 minutes before it was time to take off.

The rest of the dudes had been hanging out in the cocktail bar, eating oysters served on two enormous seashell plates and drinking wine. I told

the official who was in charge of me that I'd never eaten oysters before. He gave me two minutes to eat the leftovers, so I drank down 12, one after another, in a mix of bravado and hunger. The effects of the LSD were long gone and I had made an uneasy peace with my stomach.

This ceasefire came to an abrupt end as we boarded the plane for Hawaii. The oysters had the same consistency as the contents of a spittoon and I threw up throughout the flight.

Plane journeys, man. Thirty-two hours is a long haul. You can watch zits come from nowhere. Skin dehydrates and lips fray. The adrenalin and the sense of timelessness; bowel movements start at your shoulder-blades and end at your knees.

All that free alcohol at 35,000 feet multiplies its sea-level power several times. Troy Tate had begun his quiet session as we left London and was still punishing spirits when we landed in Hawaii.

The last half of the journey was made in oblivion. I vaguely remember watching Gary buying a Hawaiian shirt and staring out wistfully into the dry-heat sunset of Maui ... then we were gone, and landing in Sydney, half a day later.

We had come the wrong way, to save money. This way we flew into the sun and lost a day.

On the tarmac, at Sydney Airport, the authorities committed their final indignity whilst we were in their control: guys in white industrial suits crop sprayed us as we sat inert, confused and farty.

Then, at last, we had arrived.

OF *DANGERMAN* & EGG ON TOAST

As they hoisted me out of the water, my knees and feet dragged over the rocks, the white skin on my legs became pinstriped with red rivulets of blood, and I felt invigorated and alive.

I had heard about the seventh wave before, but I'd really had no inkling of its awesome and devastating power. I lay back in the sun and tripped out on my experience.

The Cosmopolitan Motor Lodge, on Bondi Beach, is strictly second division rock'n'roll. It's ideal for a group on their first Australian tour, especially if that group has no reason to be there but vibrations.

Bondi Beach is the big surfing paradise in Sydney. So much so that even I was drawn on to it. We'd go down amongst the muscle boys during our copious free time, my pale and skinny body larded up with force 15 anti-tanning lotion; whale-blubber, as Gary termed it.

My beachwear comprised a long-sleeved black T-shirt, black shorts, black Chinese slippers and socks, and a black felt hat. The rest of the group was happy to fry, so we played long and hard on the headland just out of sight of the motel.

It was the Australian grass which had lured me onto the rocks; I felt so clear-headed I didn't even notice that I was stoned. I climbed down, shoeless and unafraid, to a jagged shelf and stood completely still. Of course, the tide began to drag me and rip my feet, then buffet me and rip my knees, until Gary realised I was in trouble and panicked, then I panicked, and the water was swirling around my shoulders. Gary, Balfe and Ronnie dragged and eventually hoisted me out.

Sydney was cool, a very cool city indeed. Why the Australians allow themselves to be perceived abroad as lager-obsessed retards is beyond me.

I walked alone through King's Cross, *the* heavy porn and drugs district, at 2 a.m. wearing a nightshirt, parachute boots and a heavy ammo belt. *No*-one laughed, no-one *gave* a shit.

Colin Butler spent his time at the Mansell Rooms, a low music-biz haunt. He and Troy would get shitfaced, dance on the tables, knock everyone's drinks into their laps, throw down money for laundry bills and buy the whole club drinks.

Colin would tell me, "Oh, no work today," so I'd take a trip, hang out on the balcony and, just as the trip came on, Ingrid from the record company would arrive with an interviewer and photographer.

"Didn't you know? There are five more after this."

And that was the tone of the entire tour. There was never any formal meeting of band or crew. We arrived in Sydney and Colin took off to do his own thing. Roadies and technicians are not used to this looseness. They want dates, times, itineraries, lists, etc., and rightly so. They were all hanging out and no-one knew what the hell was going on.

Our first show had been the night after our arrival. We were so jet-lagged that Balfe fell asleep on stage. Colin bought speed for the crew, but every venue was a product of his inconsistency. Some places were huge, others were local pubs.

Our first two weeks were just in Sydney. Eight shows in one city. The first show was Paddington Town Hall. Its 1,500 capacity was crammed wall to wall, with kids flocking around outside. The next venue was a pub called the Railwaymen's Arms or something. When the Teardrop first arrived, there was a genuine buzz. People were all over. But by the end of two weeks, when we had played every hall, hut, garage and church in Sydney, no-one but the most devout fans could be bothered.

I didn't really care about this. This was as close to a holiday as we would get. I was happy just to be out of Britain and everything that was expected of me there.

Besides, I was into watching *Dangerman* on Channel 7 at 5 o'clock every morning. Gary and I would wake up, smoke a spliff and make egg on toast in the kitchenette. Then we'd go back to sleep till 8.30 and order a huge breakfast on room service.

One afternoon, we piled into Colin Butler's room straight from the beach. "You know Paul King, everyone," beamed Colin.

Oh, yeah. He's the new manager guy. I'd seen him before, when we were on tour in Britain. Paul had flown over from London for a meeting with Colin about some crisis or another. It seemed weird for a dude to come all the way for a meeting. I thought no more about it.

It was on this tour that Dave Balfe really hit his sexual peak, in both the quality and the amount of women that he fucked.

No-one had ever seen the Balfe come-on. We were fascinated and a little in awe. One day, he managed to fuck this really sweet 17 year old who was waiting for my autograph in the foyer. I was outraged, but there was no getting around it, Balfe was good.

Everyone was confused. Balfe was so ugly that most of his partners would be laughing about the idea right up to when it happened. *And* most of these women were really good looking, *and* Balfe never remembered their names *or* where he met them. That was a side to Dave Balfe that I could really enjoy; it was a genuine gift of badness, one of which he took full advantage.

Two guys from a group called The Church brought some grass down to one show. Steve, their singer, asked me if I wanted a magic mushroom. A mushroom?

He handed me this luscious hunk of psilocybin, about 2" in diameter. I ate it up and got ready for the show.

Forty minutes into the set and I'm beginning to levitate above the audience. The people at the front are the edge of a forest and as they stretch back, I am confronted by a tropical jungle. I looked down at the full length of me, way down to the southern-most tip of my boots. God, I was so beautiful. So black and shiny. The crotch of my leathers was sculpted and polished in the pale red arc lights, and there was, at that moment, nothing so beautiful as a man.

We were caught up in the glow of a song called 'Clamentis', a loose, loose groove built over a loop of marimbas and single recurring bass line. Balfe

had attempted to recreate the voodoo of Dr John's 'I Walk on Gilded Splinters', which we used as intro music to each show. Sometimes it didn't work at all, but tonight I stretched the song to its fullest and most sinewy conclusion. On and on it went, down and down, until it was just a series of wood-blocks and clicks.

I assumed my favourite pose at the front of the stage, a pose I had lifted from a painting in my grandmother's house. It is sunset at a desert watering hole. An exhausted horse is drinking in the semi-darkness. On top of the horse, his bare feet stretched towards the beast's neck, is a majestic and bowed Red Indian brave.

I stood becalmed and silent at the front of the stage, my head also bowed, but my right arm outstretched. The breathing rhythm, which Dave Balfe controlled, became smaller and smaller yet never entirely faded.

The crowd was still. I was still. The air was thick and expectant and my mushroomed mind transported the event and its witnesses back to the primordial soup.

Down and down we went. And down and down, and utter silence. Nothing ... and ... in my head ... I knew ... that I ... could stay ... like this ... all ... night ... all night ... all night ... all night ... ALL night ... ALL NIGHT...

… AALLLL ... NIGHTTTT...

My head was an equatorial jungle. I stood awed and silent.

In the dressing room and a half-hour after the show, we sat, still drained and saturated, chain-smoking endless joints. My soaking leathers were a part of me, stinking and tightening around my ass and legs. The constant nightly assault of human sweat from the inside and of blistering heat from the stage lights outside was rotting the very fabric of the leather. I had not worn any kind of underwear for years and a hole was appearing below the zipper, through the chemical reactions of urine and heat on animal hide.

Lying on the floor of the tour van, on the way back to the hotel, I was amazed at the luxury of our travel. Two weeks of driving around Sydney and cigarette-butts, roaches, old magazines, empty cans and chocolate-wrappers littered the floor of the van. In my mushroom stew, I was

oblivious. It *looked* beautiful to me and I lolled my head back against Gary's gargantuan black size-12 parachute boots, snuggling my body into the floor. I looked up at the faces of the group and crew, caught in the amber glow of the streetlights, miles above me like an animated Mount Rushmore. I purred. It was that same safe feeling that I'd had as a child curled up on the back seat of my parents' car, travelling back to Tamworth after a long weekend with Nana Todd, my Welsh grandmother.

"Ay, Copey, geddoff the floor, you plank, it's filthy," said Gary.

"Yeah, you fuckin' dickhead," Balfe couldn't resist. He wasn't tripping and I was.

In the front of the van, Troy was groaning. He had done his usual full day's drinking and had decided to entertain me. I listened to the moaning turn into gentle complaints, and told Balfe and Gary how happy I was.

"Fuck off, Copey. He's fuckin' dead ill."

It registered not one tiny bit and I hauled myself up to the front of the van. Troy was leaning into the seatbelt, the palms of his hands applying a heavy pressure to his belly. Wow, this was pure entertainment, and I told him so.

"Er, not now, Julian," beamed Colin. "We're on our way to the hospital."

Awlright, I thought. Some action. I started to sing sweetly about Troy's being ill, and how he was the coolest, and how beautiful everyone was. I flailed around inside the van, beaming at each and every one of them. Happy.

Oh, happy, happy, a-happy happy happy... "Fuckin' shut the fuck UP!" Dave Balfe exploded.

He snarled at me, a pig of a man with bulging eyes. Around me, the rest of them caught me in the united glare of their eyes and I shrank back against the van door, then down and down into a heap on the floor, my chin on my knees. I was terrified. I shut up whilst we dropped Troy off at the hospital and was too scared to utter a sound until we arrived back at the Cosmopolitan Motor Lodge, 45 minutes later. It was around 2 a.m. and the trip was still in full swing.

In the foyer, I was drooling and alone. Everyone had grabbed their keys and fled. I knocked on Balfe's door. He wouldn't open it and Gary was hiding in there.

Eventually, I walked slowly to our room. I sat on the edge of my bed and tried to think. I had so much energy left, I couldn't possibly sleep.

I turned on the TV and flicked through the channels. Nothing, nothing, nothing, then ... awlright. A film. A classic film. It was *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, an early '60s British film starring Tom Courteney. I'd seen this film countless times and I loved it. It's all about a prisoner who finds his freedom in cross-country running. There are endless scenes of him pounding through the kind of English wood that my mind had cried out for earlier in the evening.

Quickly, I stripped off my leather pants and boots and put on my long black shorts. I moved both Gary's and my bed into the centre of the room. And then I began to run. Round and around the room.

Tom was my man. Someone had come through for me.

That was me: the long distance runner.

HOLY JOE'S MANHATTAN HOLE

> "The Great and Most Essential Lord of the Lights and Artistic Genius Supreme, Monseigneur Moshie Manhattan of Sydney, Australia, and the World Does Welcome and Applaud the Most Regal and Most Beautiful Lord Julian Cope ..."

The illuminated address, in all its infinite and delicate detail, sprawled on and on down the page. It was handed to me by a great-looking man of about 45, dressed in full leathers, jacket, boots and pants.

Moshie Manhattan was an extravagantly dressed man of around 70. He wore a white summer suit and a large white Panama hat. According to the girls who hung out with us, he had been to every show and the leather guy was his boyfriend.

This peculiar couple followed us to Melbourne, but were extremely careful to keep their distance. Every other day, a new illuminated letter would arrive. I would read it and file it as a precious gift, but I never knew whether they wished to get closer; they seemed quite happy forever 10 yards away.

Melbourne is as different from Sydney as Liverpool is from London. I had been loath to leave Bondi Beach and the sanctuary of our routine, but really, I was happy anywhere.

Within hours of our arrival, Troy had surrounded himself with a new gaggle of females, Ronnie Francois had burned himself badly, Gary and I had taken some acid, walked down the strip and become hopelessly lost.

Now Neil Levine and Colin hung out together. It was a weird combination and Neil started to freak. The girl they were with was a heavy heroin addict. She was always on the tour bus. One time, she was so strung out and oblivious of everyone that she just pushed her pants down and did herself with both hands.

As soon as we arrived in Melbourne, those three went off to score heroin. They waited outside the house, then lost their nerve, then said, "Let's do

it," then ... two police patrols and an unmarked car screamed out of nowhere and raided the house as they sat indecisively.

Poor Neil was mentally caned, he couldn't handle it at all. He was beaten about the face by a million "what ifs".

Still, in Melbourne, we all lost it.

I was developing a bad habit on stage. It was called "lack of pace". I would go berserk from the moment I opened my mouth. In Melbourne, I stripped most of my clothes off and wedged myself into the filthy ceiling, between water pipes and electric cables. That was fine until a song like 'Tiny Children', which is so delicate and small. Sung by a half-naked asshole way above the audience with soot and grime over his torso, the song lost its considerable impact.

'Sleeping Gas' had hit its peak at Club Zoo, a 9-10 minute freeform blitz, truly transcendental and epic. By this time, though, it was at least 15 minutes long and completely shapeless. I thought, and so did Balfe, that the longer it was, the more of an art statement it became. Absolutely not. After the first Melbourne show, I walked into Ronnie's room. He was listening to a cassette of the performance. At the end of 'Sleeping Gas', with the house lights on and the audience embarrassed, all that can be heard is my never-ending and ridiculous scat singing: "... *Splurger-burger-burger-burger-burger-burger burger* ..."

The Teardrop Explodes group and entourage were like a badly organised parking-lot. The cars were still there, but someone was stealing things - hubcaps at first, but then wheels and even engines.

Colin Butler's skin was changing colour. He helped me to blow out any interview. It got so that I'd only do fanzines.

Our videos were on TV, projecting an image that not one of us could live up to. I saw a video by a Sydney group called The Laughing Clowns and thought it was brilliant. They had a fine atonal brass section and their song 'Holy Joe' was like the theme from some Berthold Brecht musical. I met their drummer, Jeffrey, and bought all their albums. I was a man obsessed. They had a great sense of balance.

There was too much disparity between the Teardrop live and the recorded version. I was either stripping and smothering myself in honey or singing choirboy songs. We *needed* that balance.

Finally, after what seemed like forever, we left Australia and headed for New Zealand. Ronnie Francois was broken-hearted; he'd fallen in love with a beautiful woman called Wendy and was inconsolable.

Auckland was like England 1962. There were three TV channels which shut down before 11 p.m. The outskirts of the city were filled with second-hand hi-fi and thrift shops. The middle was like Cardiff, all arcades and boutiques. One street cut through the city as though it belonged in New York. It was a weird combination and I didn't like it.

Some guys had driven up from Christchurch, 800 miles away, to see us. I wasn't interested in talking to them, though. I didn't give a shit.

My greatest memories of New Zealand? The bag of grass that the promoter gave us the night we arrived and finding a copy of *Stand* by Sly & the Family Stone for $1.40. Oh, and one other thing: I finally witnessed Dave Balfe's mythical come-on technique first hand.

We were at a private party thrown for us by the promoter. Balfe and I hung out for a while, but nothing was happening at all. We decided to leave and had actually got to the door when Balfe saw this girl sitting on the reception table.

"Are you coming upstairs?" he asked.

"Yeah, okay." And they were gone.

That was it? Nothing more? No diddle-iddle-ink like Samantha in *Bewitched*?

I waited around for 10 minutes and Balfe bounced down the staircase, red-faced and grinning.

"Sorry I was ages, I met her mate on the stairs." Ho-hum.

My mood swings were getting frequent now. I was having trouble maintaining my Babbling Fool stance. Half the time, I didn't even know

what was going on. I'd sit, eyes heavy-lidded and swollen, and do whatever anyone asked.

Balfe was usually good at maintaining momentum, but even he had problems lifting us. Why were we here? He had been with Kate St. John from The Ravishing Beauties for a while now and would occasionally break down in tears.

I had been in Sydney for five days before I could work out the time difference and ring Dorian in New York. Gary could never ring his fiancee, Lynn, in Liverpool. It cost him too much and it was night-time there whenever we were awake.

On the last day in New Zealand, Colin announced that we had no US work permits or visas. Of course, we had a tour ready and were expected in two days.

I was seized with panic, overwhelmed by it. New Zealand is as far from home as an Englishman can get and we didn't even have the right papers to get out of there.

I hung around outside the US embassy all day. God, it was sooo far away. Not just Britain, everything. Thousands of miles and shitloads of gigs before we could have any peace.

As the tension built, Colin was of no use at all. He was the same sweet dude and maintained a vicious self-belief, but he was glaringly lacking in psychology. We all milled around the Pan-Am desk and prayed to get out of the place.

And then, with about an hour to spare, Colin Butler and his beaming smile walked into the departure lounge. He handed each of us our passports and said, as we got on the plane, "Pretty cool, eh? A US visa stamped in New Zealand. Not many people will have one of those."

UNITED STATES OF MIND

Bombardment. I was being bombarded by everything. It all sucked shit, the whole fucking lot. I figured that it was probably the natural growing pains of an evil soul. I was starting to feel pretty damn evil most of the time.

The flight from New Zealand was a major league drag. The US customs in Hawaii checked every one of my 100 cassettes, every page of my lyric books, every part of my anatomy, every hair on my head.

Los Angeles was a wash-out and a let-down. We were stuck in the shitty Beverly Sunset hotel, so I reclused out and got in a foul black mood.

I rang Dorian and felt so far away from her that it killed me. I was removed from the people I loved and I just had to wait. A woman called Marcie rang. She was a friend of Lydia Lunch but I didn't give a shit.

At 3 a.m. Balfe and I put on our leathers and walked up Sunset Boulevard to Ben Frank's for Eggs Benedict. On the way back, a bunch of rednecks called us faggots and I got totally anti-American.

The guy on the hotel desk was Argentinean. It was the time of the Falklands crisis and we were supposed to care. We didn't give a shit and rolled him a spliff as a goodwill gesture. Of course, British joints have tobacco in, so he thought we were taking the piss.

We played a nondescript show at a place with no vibes and left. A total right-off drag.

In San Francisco, I began to hang out on my own. Everyone's minds were caned and we had nothing to say. I took some acid and met some young female fans in Union Park. They showed me around and I bought a few cheap biographies on Haight Street.

We played a club called the I-Beam, an old psychedelic cinema. The audience was receptive but I was energy-free. I did my trance-out with a perfunctory professionalism. Ho-hum.

Then, halfway through the set, a beautiful little girl, who had spent the evening in rapt attention in front of me, called out gently, "You're the king of psychedelia."

It was a cute but dumb thing to say, and it made me feel like a phoney and a loser. At least I worked harder after that, but the performance was no better really.

I had started to write a thing called "Krankenhaus". It was a kind of play in pidgin German, with songs and poems and a central character called Krank. Krank was a throwback. The rest of the human race had developed into weaners with huge heads, whilst Krank was tall, straight backed, blond and beautiful. This made him an outcast, so he spent his life running and fighting with his friends, Hellmouth and Joker.

It was a horrible, mean-spirited and nasty piece of work, but it reflected my state of mind and kept me alert during the asphyxiating tour schedule.

My favourite poem was a tender little piece called "Fuck Muscle Beach (Los Angeles)":

> "Fuck Muscle Beach (Los Angeles)
>
> Fuck the tough and the tanned
>
> Stay pale; white as the driven snow.
>
> Honest, it's best."

I was fascinated by translations. It had always struck me as oddly correct that· when Mort Shuman translated a Jacques Brel song, it retained all the bile and contempt of the original. Yet, when Rod McKuen translated the Brel song 'Ne Me Quittes Pas' it was reduced to the drippy '70s Las Vegas blandness of 'If You Go Away'.

My brother Joss had introduced me to nine poems by a Russian dwarf called Metranil Vavin. On leaving Leningrad for Paris, he had translated the poems into French. The versions which I knew were translated once more, from the French into English, by an American poet called Clayton

Eschlemann. The charm of these poems, besides the strange subject matter, was their unwieldy structure and archaic phrasing. With a head full of hallucinogenics and armed with the Metranil Vavin poems, I aimed to turn "Krankenhaus" into a multi level artpiece, stuffed full of songs, poems, rants and games. It was the perfect antidote to the road.

Dave Balfe's art-statement film got as close to reality as any road-film could. It was long and boring and impenetrable. The US section was just endless shots of highways, intercut with me looking deadly and lost.

On and on the tour went. I felt lessened by each successive gig. This version of the Teardrop was the strongest and most creative yet, but I was inconsistent and easily fooled by the audience. Other times, I would be jealous of the rest of the group.

In Detroit, I was really moving. I felt goood. The audience dug me the way I wanted and I was loving them back. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed something slightly off-putting. In front of the organ, rising out of the chaos of dancing freaks, the cutest girl in the audience was staring long and hard at Dave Balfe, with her tongue hanging out of her mouth. Balfe was grinning wildly from behind the organ and making equally vicious sexual faces.

I freaked out completely. What the fuck is going on? I'm giving it loads at the front of the group and an ugly plank like Balfe is turning on all the women from behind his keyboard.

The rest of the set was rubbish. I felt self-conscious and stupid. I couldn't even stare at any female in the audience; as far as I was concerned they all wanted Dave Balfe.

After the show, Balfe gave the girl five minutes of lovin' and, as it was Detroit, we sat in the back of the truck and finished all the drugs, in honour of the approaching Canadian border.

Colin Butler was pissing me off. I loved the guy but he couldn't keep it together. His skin had begun to change colour once more. It was a pale flaky grey. He kept complete control of the drugs. Balfe, Gary and I were quite poor at this time. That was the reason why I took so much LSD - it was extremely cheap and transported me for 10 hours at least.

Troy, Ronnie and Colin had spent shitloads on cocaine all across America. It really helped when the van broke down, as the coke contingent would immediately jump out and stand around, nostrils flared into a macho grimace, and order each other about.

On these long, long drives, I developed a great respect for Dave Balfe's ability to skin up. He would sit on the back row of the bumping, jumping and swaying Dodge van, Gary hounding him on one side, me hounding him on the other, the darkness and the wind from an open window buffeting his concentration and *voila*, a perfect spliff would appear from nowhere. Every time.

I even reintroduced "Sock", our old game, where I would put a sock over my head, climb out of one window, scramble over the roof and in through the other side. It still didn't put him off.

In Ottawa, we played a show in the conference room of our hotel. The audience was a mixture of rock'n'rollers and salesmen from a furniture convention. A huge black guy hung around Colin all evening. Who's this dude? Oh, he's going to sell us some acid cheap. Why, man? We're off to New York tomorrow.

Colin could not be dissuaded. He bought 200 microdots from the guy "because it was such a deal". We all said he was crazy. Especially as we were all flying and he had to drive the truck across the border at Rochester.

I wasn't interested in the stuff anyway. I was going to see Dorian and meet her parents on Long Island. You're losing your marbles, Colin.

This tour was grinding the fine edges off everyone. If I was happy for half a day, I'd think I was back to normal. But then the sinking blackness would return and my all-pervading gloom would take over.

It was wonderful to see Dorian. Lynn had stayed with her on Long Island and she and Gary were now holed up in their hotel room. It was an oasis and I was going to be fine.

The Ritz was on 14th Street. It was an old ballroom with a balcony all around the dance floor. The dressing room was on the left side of the balcony, so it was easy for people to get backstage. A curtained window in

the dressing room gave a great view of the audience and a steep old iron staircase led down on to the backstage.

I peeped out at the audience from behind the curtains. There was no-one there. Nonsense, said everyone, it's early. Besides, they're all hanging out at the bar.

Time went on. There was no-one there at all. Rubbish, you dickhead. It's going to be packed.

I didn't believe anyone. Sure there were people. But there could be more. There's room for more. Loads more. My head felt bad and I started to retch. I was forcing it, but people took notice. I told Colin that we couldn't go on. He explained that we'd signed a contract that had to be fulfilled. Besides, I couldn't let down all these people.

What people? No-one's here.

Colin pulled Troy over and said, "Talk to him." Troy baby explained that the place was fine, there was a good audience and he wouldn't go on if it was that bad. Hmm...

An hour later, I was panicking. It was past showtime. I really could not go on. My breathing was erratic and sweat coursed down my body. People started to get angry. Of course there's a crowd. Yeah, but that wasn't the point anymore. I'd built myself up so much, I couldn't come down. Shit.

I thought maybe I should act crazy. That'll convince them. I had been leaning against a metal strut in the dressing room. I started to rub my arm against it, very slowly and imperceptibly. I worked my shirt up my arm and, whilst nobody noticed, gently applied more and more pressure until the skin began to tear and a tiny wound appeared. This is perfect, I thought. I worked on, quietly and carefully opening the wound some more, then suddenly, "What's all this shit?" Balfe screamed at me. I was found out. "Don't be so fuckin' selfish, you twat. You've got Dorian here now, so cut it out." He ranted on and on about how much he was missing Kate St. John, but how we had to be professional.

Everyone raged around the room, looking for bandages and stuff. Dorian tried to calm me down, but I *was* calm. My mind was fixed on its one goal:

to get out of the performance.

By now, everyone had their eagle eye on me. It had become a contest. I saw them conspiring in the other room whilst Mal and Dorian kept hold of me.

I started to develop breathing problems. It was so hot. I was so cooped up. I couldn't stand it. I tell you, I'm going to beat these bastards.

"I'm gonna sit on the stairs, okay?"

Okay. So long as I kept the door open so they could check on me. "Fine," I said, and sat at the top of the iron stairs.

Everyone said that I threw myself down the staircase because I'd argued with Dorian and I was tripping. Not at all. For a start, I didn't *throw* myself down. I just stood up and kind of let myself fall. Also Dorian and I were quite happy. And I wasn't tripping either. I just did it to make them *think* that I was crazy. I didn't know it would come to this. But it was them or me. Also, I knew myself well. If we had played that night, I would have been so shit that Teardrop fans would have dropped like flies.

They carried me out and I got my way. I wasn't even that badly hurt. And it was a small price to pay for saving our reputation.

EMPTY CATHEDRAL

We drove down the Long Island Expressway, just the two of us, in Dorian's silver Ford Mustang. I was finally going to meet her parents and her dog. Out of the tour's clutches and a chance to get stable.

Everyone was cracking. The morning after the Ritz fiasco, we'd found out that Colin had shit out and dumped the 200 acid tabs half a mile from the US border. What a dude! Then Chris Ayres, who had joined the crew in Los Angeles, was busted for marijuana two hours from New York.

Mr and Mrs Beslity lived in Sands Point, an exclusive village near Port Washington. It was only a 40-minute drive from Manhattan and I was desperate to meet them.

We left the LIE at exit 36 and drove the 15 minutes to Sands Point down the tree-lined road with its houses set way back in the woods, one every 300 yards or so. As we passed through, I felt a little awed. I was stinky and crazy and used to slumming it. Best behaviour, I thought. Sands Point had its own private police force, but at least we didn't have to show ID at a checkpoint, like so many of those little fascist states in America.

We rounded a bend and I was confronted by Long Island Sound, a huge stretch of blue water with enormous and luxurious houses dotted at irregular intervals along its length.

The Beslity house was a huge flat-roofed ultra-modern place built into the side of a hill. The front was all on one level, but the driveway at the side fell away steeply. The back of the house was two-storey and all glass, the lawns went way down, almost to the water, and there was a secluded beach. Bloody hell, I thought.

An hour later, I was happy. I could stay here forever. My visa lasts for almost a month and we only have a few more shows.

Helen, Dorian's mother, was incredible. She was a real Greek goddess with an amazing figure and a film-star face. And, best of all, she seemed to understand me. We had often talked on the phone and now we had so much to babble about.

I was a little nervous of Dorian's father; Steve had a heavy reputation and I'd seen a photograph of him doing a handstand on the railings of the Brooklyn Bridge. He had got crazy during the '50s and lived only to extremes - either they were wealthy as hell or they were close to bankruptcy. The family had just had to get used to it.

This all helped me to feel at home. They didn't treat me like a weirdo. They didn't think I was. And I felt pretty normal after some of the stories I heard.

We stayed in this idyllic spot for two days and I hated its ending. We were off to Boston. What a horrendous drag. Still, I could come back in a week. That thought kept me high as Dorian drove me back to the Tour of Hell.

In Boston. Who cares? It was like I'd never been away. I felt myself going down again. Shit, I've got to beat this thing, it's not for very long now.

The routines fell in once more. The soundcheck, hanging around, an interview, hanging around and photos in a parking lot, waiting, a meal, then waiting. I spent my life waiting.

I started to feel sorry for myself and moped around in my room. I didn't want to see anyone at all, let alone go on stage.

There was a knock on the door. I ignored it but they were persistent and a voice bellowed. It was Colin Butler. He said Balfe was freaking out and wanted to go home.

Dave Balfe sat hunched over with tears streaming down his cheeks. His eyes were completely closed up and he was inconsolable. After about 40 minutes, he managed to tell us that we had to finish the tour now. This minute.

I had freaked out so much during the last tours that this was standard. But not from Balfe. And they always managed to persuade me back to work in the end, using guilt-trips, or threats, or sometimes even reason.

This time, it was different. Dave Balfe was gone in the head. While people had been worrying about me, he had flipped out. It took ages for Colin to understand.

The last show we played was in Ottawa. Colin would take a lot of shit for letting the group fall to pieces on the East Coast. Dorian and I drove Balfe to Kennedy Airport, 200 miles in silence.

Two days later, I sat in my old bedroom at my parents' house, up in Tamworth. I still had three weeks left on my US visa, but Colin Butler had insisted that we were going to be busy immediately.

We weren't busy at all. We had nothing to do for weeks. I sat around the house vacantly and tried to relax. I needed to ring Dorian all the time, but my parents were always phobic about overseas calls. However much I explained to them that I would pay for the call, they still couldn't imagine it could be less than £50. So every evening, I would walk up to the phone box and feed endless 50p pieces into the slot.

One day, as I sat talking to Hutch, one of my oldest friends from school, I felt surprised when he said I was doing well. As far as I was concerned, I had failed more than anyone I knew. I was back in the bedroom that I'd left in 1976. The record collection leaned up against the same wall as in the old days. My marriage had failed. I had nowhere to live. It was May 1982 and I was 24. I felt like an empty cathedral, right after a coronation.

GROEDIPUS

I was fed up. I was fed up and hollow inside. Why be in a group? It just keeps unnecessary pressure on. I have to worry about the rest of them getting paid, so I have to write songs at a reasonable pace, with a single every five or six songs so we can stay in the charts and compete with shit who would sell their ass, their mouths and their souls to any dickhead record company who will fuck them off as soon as they drift from the formula.

I loved pop music. I wanted to make pop music. I refused to hide behind some art trip. Trivialise your trip. Don't fall for the art statement, that's total garbage. But all this was falling on stony ground. Groups were appearing with ridiculous attitudes. The punk thing that I believed in so much was being torn down. And I'd helped to do it. I'd appeared like some nice boy with the blond fringe and the big beat, and I'd confused the whole issue. I'd been greedy. I still was greedy. I had nearly a whole album of songs ready to record. Well, not really. But I'd told everybody in the press, so I'd better get writing.

I was jealous of Echo & the Bunnymen. Jealous as hell. They had no need to get crazy on drugs or fuck themselves up. Mac was quite happy to go out night after night and pretend. They would appear to free-form on stage, but it was worked out down to the last aside. And Mac would do his "I'm high" bit and everyone would believe it.

I was so angry at this. But, then again, I was angry at everything. And my focusing was a way off.

The evil was in me. I believed that much. I had to trust Dave Balfe, really. I knew I couldn't trust myself; if I was evil, I had to force a democracy on the group. Give my power up and suppress my own opinions.

I played some of the new songs to Balfe. He said they didn't sound like The Teardrop Explodes. I looked at him like he was crazy. Have you even heard *Wilder*, Balfe? *That* sounded nothing like the Teardrop, until we did it.

But this time, Balfe would not acquiesce. My new songs were "rock", according to him, and I should do a solo album as well as the new Teardrop LP. "And I'm gonna write some songs for a change. Why should you get all the fuckin' publishing?"

I'd never heard it put so bluntly. Balfe never wrote songs. I couldn't see why he wanted to take on such a task. But, like a lot of musicians, he seemed to think that a song was just a bunch of music with some lyrics over it.

I guessed that I just had to trust him on this one. Maybe I was prejudging him. Maybe he's got the muse.

BLURRED MAN OF ALVECOTE

I had nothing to do. Nothing at all. Balfe was in London writing and recording songs for the third album. Gary was up in Liverpool with Lynn. After such intensity on tour, the let-down forced me into an inert state. It was at this time that staying with my parents became such a help. After a few days, their sense of order at least gave me something to focus on.

I would wake early at my parents' house. Such was the strict routine there that at 7.30 every morning I would find myself eating bacon and eggs in the kitchen with my father.

I needed that routine. I needed severe normality. My parents wouldn't take my weirdness and it forced me to act like every other human being. Joss was away at Essex University, so this time in Tamworth gave us an opportunity to rebuild our thang.

My father had worked as an insurance agent for the Prudential for what seemed like forever. His clients were scattered around the Tamworth area and, as a child, I had loved to travel with him when he made his calls. Now, around 18 years later, I was doing exactly the same thing. When he called on a client, I would sit in the car and read, waiting for the door of the house to open and his smiling face to appear. I felt so terribly lost, I needed to recreate as best as I could.

Although Tamworth is a real pig to look at, it is surrounded by some of the most beautiful villages I know. We would drive through Seckington and Newton Regis, Austrey and Hopwas, all these places that flooded my memories and irrigated my soul.

Over the next few days, the whole area started to make sense. Maybe my familiarity with it had been lost. Maybe my travelling had given me a new perspective. Maybe you do need to travel to appreciate what you have at home.

Whatever it was, Tamworth was beginning to grow in my head. I had nowhere to live and no roots anymore. Liverpool was out of bounds, as my ex-wife lived there. London was no good; it drove me crazy and I couldn't even bear to walk down its streets.

I began to warm to my old town. Hell, if this place was in the American Midwest, I'd love it. So love it, you bloody snob.

One day, as we were going home via Polesworth, I asked my father to drive down the road where we used to pick blackberries. We turned right down a winding lane and went on towards a weird place called Alvecote. The hedgerows were gone now but everything else was much the same.

Alvecote is built on the main railway line between London and the north west. We followed the lane for about two miles until we came to the priory. Alvecote Priory is a ruin. Supposedly, it was the scene of the vile rape and execution of nuns during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Now, all that was left of the walls was an enormous arch like a curved and inverted 'V'. There was a deep and dangerous crater, about the size of a large empty swimming-pool. This had been the basement of the priory and its floor was now littered with huge blocks of stone where the walls had collapsed inwards over the years. I was entranced by the place.

I walked the 20 yards to the canal. The old wartime pill-box was still there, its concrete construction almost hidden in the undergrowth. I scrambled and scraped my way onto its high roof and stretched up on to my toes to survey the area. My father left me there to explore for a while...

It was over an hour later and I was standing high, high up above the canal looking out across the counties. I had explored the entire area: the tow-path, the railway line and the narrow twisting lane. At one point, they all ran parallel to each other and pointed the way out through floodlands up to a barren mound rising out of nowhere. As a child, this was the swamp and its Anglo-Saxon funeral mound. It held great significance for my brother and me: we thought this ancient tract of land was inhabited by a spirit world and would tread carefully.

Returning now, as a confused shell of an adult, the place seemed just as special. I was sure it had power. I stayed on the mound for a considerable time, then, as dusk approached, I began the four-mile trek home.

For the first time, I considered Tamworth as a possible home. It was directly between Liverpool and London, and only a one and a half hour

train journey from both cities. Also, it was cheap and it was far from prying eyes.

In a couple of days, my mind was made up. I rang Dorian to tell her the news and began to look for a three-storey house. It had to have three levels, it just did. I wanted a house with an upstairs living room and hardly any garden.

In a couple of days, we'd found the *only* three-storey house that was for sale. It was right in the centre of Tamworth and cost £15,000. It was 400 yards from the train station and 300 yards from the shopping mall. I made an offer and got accepted and waited to move in.

I was going to have a home, a bloody great home.

FALLING DOWN AROUND ME

In London, shit was happening. Paul King, our new manager that nobody knew, was assessing his situation. He called me down for a meeting and it was then that I found out that we would be supporting Queen at two stadiums! He'd mentioned it vaguely during his 24-hour visit to Sydney, but I hadn't been paying attention.

Still, that seemed like nothing compared to the main thing: our debts. They were enormous. Colin Butler had taken Bill Drummond's small debt and built something all of his own from it, something huge and special. This was a real drag, especially as I wanted to split the group up.

The debts continued to mount up over the next weeks, but they soon became overshadowed by Balfe's plan. He wanted to sack Troy Tate and Ron Francois. That's cool, I thought. That's one step closer to splitting up. Awlright.

I felt no compunction about the move, it washed right over me. But wait until after the Queen shows, I warned Balfe. And *you* can tell them, this one's your idea.

Back in Tamworth, I waited impatiently for the house contracts to be signed. I fought with my father about it. Come on man, when am I in there? I needed a place, I needed Dorian over here, I wanted to fuck off from everything.

In London Dave Balfe recorded song after song. One time, I played him a thing on acoustic guitar called 'The Greatness and Perfection of Love'. He refused to use the same rhythm that I'd written, but liked the song. He also turned 'Metranil Vavin', a gentle eulogy to my Russian poet, into a funking swamp thang. When I returned, a month later, both songs were impossible to sing. Ho-hum.

We played the Queen shows in late June. I didn't try to escape, just came on all ugly. I found my oldest, shittiest, most creased hand-dyed piece-of-shit shirt from the bottom of my closet in the Liverpool flat. It was damp and stunk of mildew, kind of like old oranges.

At both Leeds and Milton Keynes, the audience were incensed that we were playing. Ha-ha, this was fun. We were bottled mercilessly from beginning to end by heavy-metal bum-boys who shouted, "Fuck off, you queer!" at me. Wow, they dig Monsieur Freddie and they call *me* queer. So much for the workings of the average mind. I blew them kisses and stuck my ass out at the audience. They hit it full on with a coke bottle.

One guy missed my head with four consecutive bottles. I grinned at him with my puppy face, all tongue and drooling. His fifth shot made perfect contact with my right cheek, Fuccck Offf! The audience applauded wildly. I applauded too, but I was red-faced and hurting. I had a certain respect for a hatred so blind.

Then Queen arrived in a helicopter as we played 'The Culture Bunker'. It was a low trick. But it was their show and what were we doing there in any case? Besides, low tricks are the main act's prerogative.

I cared nothing about The Teardrop Explodes. The sooner we die, the better. In London, Dave Balfe told us that he had an LP ready to record.

In London, I told everyone that I had half a solo LP to record.

In London, Paul King got me drunk at the Coconut Grove and told me that we owed over £90,000.

In London, I spent an afternoon answering mail that had built up since Liz Atkins' fan club had fallen to pieces. I made hundreds of photocopies of my face and wrote the same message on each one: "Dear so-and-so, Julian is dead. He died yesterday. I'm sure he would have hated you anyway. Love Liz."

Then I put a handful of assorted heavy-metal badges in each letter and mailed them off.

In Tamworth, I finally moved into no. l Mill Lane. Miss Dorian Beslity flew over at one day's notice. I bought a mattress and a toaster, and moved my shit from Liverpool.

We holed up for a few weeks to get stoned and reason the situation through. My mind was brittle as hell. I was lucid most of the time, but felt

my attention lapsing in long conversations.

Finally, I agreed. We'll do the third Teardrop album, then I'll be free.

Two weeks later, I sent Dorian home. I've got to be professional about this; I don't want anyone to have reason to call me weird.

Yeah. Maybe life's course would run smoothly for a change.

WHIRLPOOL

"And perched in such domestic worldliness as this

Just plan to pull the rope at any sign of bliss."

I'd been screaming my head off the whole journey. That was part of the fun. We were swerving all over the place and these country lanes were far too narrow to give much margin for error.

I knew that Gary had no license, but I couldn't drive *at all* and anyway I trusted him well enough. He didn't really want to *kill* me. That was just a game. So if the worst came to the worst, I knew I could always bang on the roof and he would stop. Anyway, since Balfe had banned us from the studio a week before, we had to have *some* fun.

The only way to stay on the roof of a car, at real speed, is to keep your head down and assume a crucifix position. We had a rule that the car's front windows had to be open. That way, I could stretch right across the roof and lock my fingers around the edges of the doors.

Gary and I were now on our third lap. It was a circuit of around four miles, avoiding all local villages except this one tiny hamlet without a name.

Kingsley Ward, the owner of Rockfield Studios, had lent us this ancient beaten-up Cortina estate, which we nicknamed "Old Yellow" on account of its vile paint job. For the first few days, we had driven everywhere with me on the roof. It was only after that got boring that we hit upon the idea of the game.

And now? Now we were locked in the struggle of our mechanical rodeo, with Gary in charge of the beast below and me the pale rider, shrieking and howling and hanging on for dear life.

Down into the vale we thundered, my mouth tight-lipped as Chris Evert, avoiding the tiny flies that rushed into my hair and my eyes. Then up the other side and up and up and over the hill we went. A slight bend and, take it carefully and, more carefully, Gary, then out of the curve and wow.

We passed a car on a wide stretch. Ten seconds earlier would have been a disaster, ha ha. Not a problem. Have you seen this guy? The rubber man. There's no way anything could happen.

I loved to taunt fate. Come on, come on. You're not going to kill me, you're chicken. Not you, Gary, fate.

We hurtled into a three-hill roller-coaster, up and wheee! DOWN! Up and wheee! DOWN! Up and wheeee!

Gary beat on the ceiling of the car, bam, bam, then he wound up the window on the driver's side, trapping my right hand.

"Hey, Gary, heyyyyyyy." (I kick the car with my boots.) "Gary, fuckin' Garyyyy." (I beat the roof with my head.)

At this point, Gary is a dead man once he stops. He is 6'5" and thick as shit if he doesn't suss that fact.

On the way down the final hill, Gary winds down the window, I free my right hand, a red car appears from nowhere, we brake like fury, miss the car and ... slide gracelessly into a ditch.

I was lying upside-down in a thorn bush. I wasn't hurt, it was too funny. I could have fun with Gary, I really could. We didn't even haul the car out for a while. It looked fine where it was. We skinned up and lay in the back, laughing our heads off.

The record being made had nothing to do with me. That fact was only now beginning to hit home. Dave Balfe and Hugh Jones had been holed up in Studio 2 for a week now. In that time, neither Gary nor I had even been invited down. In fact, we were positively unwelcome.

Hugh had been a good friend and ally. He had recorded more Teardrop stuff than anyone else and normally we sat side by side making decisions. But now, though he did not know it, he was fast becoming the enemy.

Dinner was at 7.30 every night, and Balfe and Hugh would leave their studio cocoon, haul themselves up to the white house on the hill and sit there, confused and irritable.

Occasionally, Sally, Hugh's girlfriend, would arrive with their stupid Dalmatian, who would retrieve old bacon covered in hair from behind the cooker, then lick everybody. Then Balfe would wait patiently whilst Hugh and Sally retired to their private room to scream at each other. Gary and I would ask how it was going and for a while, over an after-dinner spliff, we were friends again.

Then they'd be off into the night, and we'd settle down for another evening of endless drugs and videos. We watched *Animal House* constantly. We rented it six times and I then went out and bought it.

Gary and I started to buy a half ounce of hash every day, dropping half of it on the patterned carpet and leaving half-smoked joints all over the place.

Lynn, Gary's fiancee, was doing all the cooking. This kept us both a little more balanced, but I rang Dorian every night, freaking out at what The Teardrop Explodes was becoming.

A little while later, Balfe let us into the studio. We listened passively to the series of whirs, clicks, loops and endless synthesized noises that constituted our next album.

I filled up the electric kettle as full as possible and made coffee in each of the 12 mugs. I put 10 sugars in each of the coffees and then dropped Maryland cookies and digestive biscuits into each mug until they overflowed with soggy, sweet and disgusting mess. Then I poured the contents of the sugar bowl into the coffee jar, emptied the box of tea-bags into the half-empty kettle, surveyed the pathetic microcosm of chaos and walked out of the room.

I believe that my little protest reflected the stature of Balfe's work perfectly. Mine was a tiny and concentrated vandalism against a narrow-minded and artless dry-wank.

The days limped by. A blurred routine of nothingness. At the end of each night, I staggered up to my bed and slept a numb, dreamless sleep. Around 10.30 the next morning, I would surface for a huge farmhouse breakfast from Lynn.

My bedroom was hung with drapes and flags from home, and my clothes hung on nails over the walls. My blaster and tapes were all that I cared about.

Occasionally, Dave Balfe gave me a reference tape for me to judge the album's progress. I never listened, I was too sad. Instead, I played rough tapes of my new songs, over and over. Now, these will never come out. And they feel. They really feel. Even if you hate them, at least they live somewhere. On this album Balfe was excluding me from, the songs had no natural place anywhere.

Gary and I did less every day. Sometimes we played "Bottle". You line up milk bottles on a wall, walk back about 15 feet and then try to scare the bottles into falling. I always won - after half an hour, Gary would lose his temper, throw stones at the bottles and forfeit the game.

Kingsley Ward was concerned; once he found us lying in the town square in Monmouth. We'd been there for hours. What else was there for us?

Kingsley was crazy. He was famous for being unbalanced and he hated his brother, Charles, who co-owned the studio. So one day, to make us happy and to put the fear of God into Charles, he bought us a double-barrelled shotgun.

Now even I thought that was strange. Stupid, really.

As soon as Balfe heard about it, he dropped everything and came up to the house. The two of us ran out into the trees and shot wildly and indiscriminately at everything we saw. We set up a clay-pigeon shoot.

The next day, I heard shots on the opposite side of the valley. I ate breakfast and skinned up a joint, got dressed and walked in the direction of the noise.

Up in the open fields behind the studio, Gary Dwyer stood, gun in hand, reloading for the umpteenth time that day. Mark Parle, Lynn's brother, let another clay-pigeon go. Swwwupp!

Bang! Gary missed. He cursed under his breath. And now I was here to wind him up.

"How many's that, Garfield?" I asked casually.

"About 80," said Mark.

Gary was pissed off. He had not yet hit one of the things.

"I'll show you what to do," I said, not knowing the handle from the pipe. Mark let one go and I fired into the air. I missed. Gary laughed.

I told them that I knew my problem: I should be treating the shotgun like a beautiful woman. Men in films always talk like that. Mark let go another clay. I shot. Swwwuppp! Smash! I hit the thing.

I handed the gun back to Gary and said, with a dreadful sigh of boredom, "That's how you do it, okay?" and walked off down the hill.

I was walking down the lane when PK 354 pulled up. It was Paul King's British racing green E-type Jaguar. He had come to see how we were doing and tell us about the autumn tour. I wasn't interested at all. The front of the Jag reminded me of a dolphin's face and I insisted on riding on the hood, at 5 mph, up the hill, so gently and with so much power.

Paul was concerned. Nothing was happening. Really not anything. The tour was looming large and the recording was not close to being finished. Hugh Jones was off the rails and Balfe had this blind belief that, should we finish it, the record would be a classic. He wanted to call the album "Be Prepared to Become a Whirlpool". Ho-hum.

A few days later, we were tripping to escape from the prison of the album. Gary and I were happy and I even persuaded Balfe to chill out with us. Bill Butt was down to film some of the recording and suddenly everything was fine.

Gary and I were playing "Brick", this game we'd invented where you stand about 15 feet apart and try to knock the other guy out. Every time I threw a brick, the unleashed energy would propel me on to the floor and I'd become a hysterical slavering dog.

It was a slow game. The acid in my system was cut with some weird amphetamine which gave me that drug feeling that makes your veins feel like a bunch of electrical cables.

Whenever the brick came my way I could see its vapour trail immediately from Gary's two-handed throw to the arc of its flight towards me. One shot mesmerised me so much that I stood petrified, the brick cutting through the air like a *Twilight Zone* space-freighter and hitting me fully in the chest. A shudder echoed through my body but there was no pain. I was gargantuan, beautiful and indestructible.

Then Balfe decided to play. What a knobhound! We'd had this cool elegant scene going, like croquet or something, and this maniac starts in on us.

First, his brick missed me by inches. Then his next brick missed Gary by inches. Then, out of nowhere, another brick hit Gary on the side of his head. Blood poured down his temple and I rushed up to help. Bloody hell, I was so angry.

Behind the hedge, Balfe's head bobbed up and down, scared stiff but smiling that dumb-ass grin.

"You're fuckin' dead, Balfe!" I screamed. I ran to the cupboard under the stairs and grabbed the shotgun. I gave it to the still groggy Gary and helped him outside. Dave Balfe began to remonstrate and protest hopelessly. No way, man. You are the Dead Dude of Rockfield.

And off down the hill Balfe ran, with Gary in slow elegant pursuit. John Wayne as Rooster Cockburn in *True Grit*. Right on.

I had no sense of time. It felt like forever, maybe it was an hour. Bill Butt and I stood at the entrance to the roof of the white house, surveying the opposite side of the valley with his binoculars. Two tiny dots moved across the landscape and the occasional shot rang out. It reminded me of those *Tom & Jerry* cartoons when Tom is defenceless and has to reason with a Jerry mouse who is armed and furious.

A half hour later and I was filling up buckets from the septic tank in the field. I lined up the buckets, then filled one with clean water.

Gary soon arrived, wild-eyed and happy. "The twat's disappeared. I think he's in the woods."

I showed Gary the rows of shit-filed buckets and explained my plan.

When Balfe finally dared to come near the house, he was sooo reasonable, so careful and so freaked out. We stood at the door of the house and I picked up the bucket of water. Then I poured it over my head and smiled.

"You've gotta let us do that to you, Balfe, you twat."

Dave Balfe bobbed about for a while and finally forgot the danger. He was tripping heavily and dorked up to us with his most slappable expression on his face. Whoosh...

Whenever Balfe got it, he really got it. He stood there covered in cow-shit and septic-tankness and smiled. Gary and I walked back into the house with our empty buckets and skinned up like mad.

DEATH RATTLE

"If we do this, though, Kingy, the whole thing will've been for nothing. I mean, we'll be just like all the other shit."

I sat in the dressing room of Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre, tears of grief and disbelief coursing down my face. I had tried and I had failed. The tour must go ahead. If not, Paul King would go bankrupt and we didn't want to put him through that as well.

I'd given up on the album. It would never get finished. Balfe could scream his head off for all I cared. He still needed me to sing the fucking tunes.

Now it was the tour. The total right-off tour. A sensational drag of epic proportions. And here we were on the first day of rehearsal, pleading with Paul King not to make us do it.

See, Balfe had decided that we could tour as a three piece with tapes. I had said yeah, yeah, yeah, to anything, just to keep him busy and me in Tamworth. Of course, now I had to sing to a bunch of synthesized tapes and Gary had to mime half a set and play bullshit over bullshit for the rest of the time.

Even Paul King didn't want us to do it. He told us it sucked shit the minute he heard 'Reward' played too fast on a dinky bum-boy synth. But we had to.

Julian David Cope was going to sell his ass to stop his manager, Paul King, going bankrupt. This sale was made easier for me in the knowledge that Paul would have been solvent and happy had Colin Butler not one day walked in to his office with stories aplenty.

We had to do this. We had to do this. Shit, what an empty incredible feeling. Walking on stage knowing that you can not be better than total crap is a headtrip. Knowing that makes you think so-what to everything.

I tried to shut myself off on stage. There was scaffolding for me to prance around on and different heights of staging so I could be a showbiz dude. I hadn't helped design anything on the stage, but that made me feel more

guilty. Ignorance of Balfe's crimes against the Teardrop was no defence. Had we been a political regime, I would have been shot alongside him.

This was it. This was the end. Fans saw the show and said, "What happened? You've lost it." I was transparent. I could not hide my feelings. After every song, I'd apologise and announce the next one. I was used to total freedom, freedom to groove and stumble and trance out. On this tour, I was so burned that I couldn't concentrate one minute. I missed vocal cues all the time, the tape would be in the wrong place and I'd throw Gary and Balfe. I'd have tantrums when the tape snapped, of course I would, anyone would. You feel so foolish, the audience has their sense of disbelief whipped from under them.

At Manchester, the tape snapped during 'The Culture Bunker'. Then it went into auto-reverse. Then I kicked the eagle motifs off the main stage in disgust. Then I kicked the lights off the highest stage so they were hanging by their wires in mid-air. I kicked off my boots and ripped off my shirt and hurled them into the audience. I threw my electric 12-string off the stage, the monitors, the mike-stand, the whole lot, all the time screaming apologies and saying how shit we were.

I thought about taking my leather pants off, but really, so what? The stage was a perfect metaphor for bad sex without introducing another soft dick into the proceedings.

An hour later, the audience was still outside our dressing-room window, baying for blood. They deserved it, too. We finished the tour with the press on our heels. Julian Cope had been too cocky for too long; they finally found out how much I really stunk.

I didn't discuss it with anyone. I just did it. I split the group up. It was November 1982 and we were old news.

Dave Bates had played me the Blancmange album and told me it was like Scott Walker. Fuck off, no way. Blancmange were this terrible middle-class duo. The singer sung heavy fake depression songs, but smiled on TV like it was a joke.

At home in Tamworth, I burned the album sleeve on the cooker, then skated around the kitchen on the record before taking a knife to it. Then I

pinned the whole mess on the wall, where it stayed forever as a symbol of my guilt.

Officially, we split on November 15th 1982, four years to the day after the first gig with Echo & the Bunnymen. No third album, nothing. That was the bloody end of that.

The Cast of *Head-On* in 1999 C.E.

DAVE BALFE sold Zoo Records, created Food Records and signed Blur. Then he sold the lot for millions. He is married to Helen and has two children, Gabriel and Isabella.

DAVE BATES runs his own London-based record label.

RITCHIE BLOFELD This Prescot College madman and occasional Hungry Types singer is now headmaster of a Newbury school. He lives with his wife Joan and son Tom.

IAN BROUDIE The Big in Japan lead guitarist has eclipsed everyone in recent years with his Noel Harrison / 'Windmills of your Mind'-styled Lightning Seeds. His soccer anthem 'Football's Coming Home' is clearly the new 'You'll Never Walk Alone'.

PETE BURNS Someone showed me recent TV footage of *Rock Goes to Collagen*, in which Pete claimed that he was nowadays unheard of here but 'Big in Japan'. Looks better than he used to and will always be a legend.

COLIN BUTLER Whereabouts unknown.

JAYNE CASEY The former Big in Japan singer is Director of Humanix at the Bluecote Chambers in Liverpool.

GEOFF DAVIES Still manages Probe Records and '80s legends Half-Man, Half Biscuit.

PETE DEFREITAS Echo & the Bunnymen's darling drummerboy is dead. He left behind his common-law wife Johnson and daughter Lucy.

BILL DRUMMOND Writes Patriarchal literature with the '80s video-biker Zodiac Mindwarp.

GARY DWYER The former drummer for The Teardrop Explodes drives a forklift truck in Liverpool.

ROGER EAGLE The founder of Eric's and the Liverpool scene died of cancer in May of this year (1999 C.E).

RONNIE FRANCOIS The Teardrops' former bass player lives in Australia with Wendy, whom he met on the fateful Teardrop tour of 1982. They are happily married and he is still making music.

ALAN GILL The co-writer of 'Reward' is in jail.

CHRIS GOODSON The other member of my 1977 experimental band Hungry Types is a bearded village elder and relief sheriff in Kurdistan(!) He is married to a member of the nomadic Pathickey tribe and they have seven daughters. He never answers my postcards.

MICK HOUGHTON is still my publicist and still a recluse, but still exerts a low key force on the outside world. When Rob Dickens, MD of Warner Brothers, signed us to the publishing company in 1980, he said to Dave Balfe and me: "Come and meet Mick Houghton, he's the only other person in the world I know who still uses the word 'shag'." Nowadays, "shag" has become a cool term the world over, whereas in 1980 it was less street than "front bottom" - and it's all because of Mick Houghton's insidious subterraneous cultural burrowings. I've even heard it suggested that it was Mick who brought the phrase "Skin up!" to the south, which seems possible, as I never heard the phrase in London before 1981, and then only from other northern rock'n'rollers.

CANDY JAMES My college roommate lives in Halifax with her husband Steve. I saw her for the first time in 20 years on the *Modern Antiquarian* tour in November '98.

HOLLY JOHNSON Nowadays, Holly has re-emerged from self-imposed hermitdom to be embraced as a mightily deserved '90s Gay Icon.

IAN McCULLOCH had to reform Echo & the Bunnymen recently without all the original back members. During the lean early '90s, when the Bunnymen opted for a less '80s singer, McCulloch fronted a Doors/Love retro-styled group called Elektra-Fiction and refused to play any Bunnymen material whatsoever.

DAVE PICKETT The original drummer for The Teardrop Explodes is an artist living in Kent. He still looks uncannily like his old self and recently reminded me that though 'Sleeping Gas' was my music and words, it was his title.

PAUL SIMPSON The original organist with The Teardrop Explodes and leader of The Wild Swans is married to his long-term partner Jeanne, who is a successful designer. His '80s Wild Swans singing-style has been successfully appropriated by Ian McCulloch for the sound of the New Bunnymen, Paul nowadays records instrumentals for a Gloucestershire label with ex-Christians / Yachts organ guy Henry Priestman.

SMELLY ELLY This seminal Liverpool-scener AKA Paul Ellerbeck has lived on Peckham Rye estate, in South London, these past 17 years and called me out of the blue in 1997 C.E. to ask if I had a tent he could borrow.

TROY TATE Became the lead singer with Brummie automatons Fashion during the mid '80s. The self-styled 'International Dosser' and third Teardrops guitarist now lives a quiet life and works in a theatre in York.

THE ADOLESCENT grew up.

PETE WYLIE Became Liverpool's most successful misogynist- he even named his daughter Mersey! Still successful in all his rigorous undertakings and successfully tours parts of Scandinavia with Wah Pete! The Georgie Porgie of Rock!

PAM 'PAMMO' YOUNG The First Woman of Zoo is the second most rock'n'roll woman I ever met after my wife Dorian. She's still gorgeous and lives in Liverpool with her daughter Velvet.